

**MEMOIRS OF THE
DUKE DE SAINT-SIMON**



Louis de France, Duke of Bourgoyne

MEMOIRS OF THE DUKE DE SAINT-SIMON

AN ABRIDGED TRANSLATION WITH NOTES

BY
FRANCIS ARKWRIGHT

With Four Illustrations in Photogravure

IN SIX VOLUMES
VOL. III

LONDON
STANLEY PAUL & CO
31 ESSEX STREET, STRAND, W.C.

MEMOIRS OF THE
BUREAU OF THE
NAVY

THE OFFICIAL RECORDS OF THE
NAVY DEPARTMENT

THE OFFICIAL RECORDS OF THE
NAVY DEPARTMENT

First published in 1915

STANLEY PAUL & CO.
100 NASSAU ST. N.Y.

CONTENTS

VOL. III

CHAPTER I

1707

Opening of the campaign in Flanders—The army placed in imminent peril by Vendôme's sloth—The Duke of Savoy invades the south of France—Capture of Fréjus—Extraordinary conduct of Fleury, the Bishop—Anecdotes of Cardinal Fleury—He is duped by the English Ambassador and by the Emperor—The Duke of Savoy lays siege to Toulon—His failure and retreat—Tessé's absurd despatches—I go to Forges for the waters—Dispute between Dukes and Princes—Surprising sentiments expressed by the King—The King visits d'Antin at Petit-Bourg—An avenue disappears in a night—Madame de Maintenon's jest—Rising fortunes of d'Antin . pp. 1-21

CHAPTER II

1707—1708

Chamillart and Cattinat—Death of the Count d'Auvergne—Of Moreau—Of the Archbishops of Rouen and Aix—Of Madame d'Armagnac—The Grand Equerry looks out for another wife—Marshal de Villeroy resigns his Captaincy of the Guard—His appointment given to his son—Madame de Thianges—Her wit and pride—A snub for the King—Chamillart's failing health—He seeks a great marriage for his son, and makes a grievous mistake—He resigns the office of Controller-General—Desmarets appointed—Outcry against the Duke de Beauvilliers—Death of Langlée—Of Montbron—His arms—The origin of his family pp. 22-45

CHAPTER III

1708

The Duke of Orleans prepares to return to Spain—His staff—The King prefers an atheist to a Jansenist—I discover that the Duke de Chevreuse is a Minister of State—An important design—Projected invasion of Scotland—A revolt fomented in the Spanish Netherlands—Bergheyck exposes Vendôme's ignorance—An unlucky delay—The King

of England ill with measles—The Scotch expedition fails—Return of the King of England—He assumes the title of Chevalier de St. Georges—His reception at Marly—A cheap Marshal's bâton—An insignificant marriage leads to important results—Disinterested conduct of the Chancellor—Retirement of Brissac—Anecdotes concerning him—Devout ladies exposed—Rouvroy claims relationship with me—His history—I decline the honour—Illness of the Duchess of Burgundy—The King's cold-blooded selfishness—I discover that the Duke of Burgundy is destined for the command in Flanders

pp. 46-64

CHAPTER IV

1708

An important conversation with M. de Beauvilliers—I remonstrate against sending the Duke of Burgundy to Flanders, and predict unfortunate consequences—M. de Beauvilliers is unconvinced and angry—The King announces the appointment of the Duke of Burgundy—The Duke of Berry to serve as a volunteer—The King of England to serve under the name of Chevalier de St. Georges—Bergheyck and Puységur sent to confer with Vendôme—The hero snubs them—The King shows Samuel Bernard over the grounds at Marly and extracts much-needed supplies from him—Death of Mansart—Hasty departure of a bridge—Mansart's bad taste—Rivals for his office—Death of La Frette—His duel and its consequences—Death of the Countess de Grammont—Chamillart in trouble—I advise him to speak openly to the King—Satisfactory result

pp. 65-97

CHAPTER V

1708

Courcillon marries Pompadour's daughter—Lanjamet—The Prince de Léon—A queer elopement—Madame de Roquelaure demands the Prince's head—Scandalous amusement of the courtiers—My mother-in-law implicated—A country maid startled—The matter arranged peaceably—Cardinal de Bouillon visits me at La Ferté—His pride and absurdities—The King displeased at his long stay—Illness and death of Madame de Pontchartrain—Affected grief of the widower—He allows himself to be persuaded to return to his duties—Affliction of Madame de Saint-Simon—I pay a visit to La Vrillière at Châteauneuf—The Duke of Orleans in Spain—He finds nothing ready for his campaign—His vexation with Madame des Ursins—Proposes a scurrilous toast—Madame des Ursins and Madame de Maintenon vow vengeance—The Duke impenitent—He takes Tortosa—Minorca captured by the English—Death of Madame de Châtillon

pp. 88-106

CHAPTER VI

1708

An inauspicious day chosen for the Duke of Burgundy's departure—He passes by Cambrai—Affectionate meeting with the Archbishop—The

King of England joins the army—Vendôme's sloth—He misses a favourable opportunity—Marlbrough steals three marches on him—Battle of Oudenarde—Confusion and disorder—Vendôme's insolence to the Duke of Burgundy—The Vidame d'Amiens and Nangis save the fragments of the army—The Duke of Burgundy retires to Lawendeghem—Unsatisfactory despatches received from him and Vendôme—Biron returns as a prisoner on parole—His report of the hostile Generals—Marlbrough expresses deep interest in the Chevalier de St. Georges—Prince Eugène and the Swiss troops—The cabal of Meudon—Its objects—Endeavours to throw discredit on the Duke of Burgundy—Alberoni's artful letter—Exposure of its lies—Scurrilous lampoons against the Duke of Burgundy—It becomes dangerous to say a word in his favour—The Duke de Beauvilliers admits his mistake pp. 107-125

CHAPTER VII

1708

The Duchess of Burgundy's anger aroused against Vendôme—Madame de Maintenon sides with her, and is temporarily reconciled with M. de Beauvilliers—Alarm of the cabal—The King annoyed by the Duchess of Burgundy's complaints—Chamillart's advice to the Duke of Burgundy—The Duchess's anger—She determines, in conjunction with Madame de Maintenon, to ruin Chamillart—Harcourt assists them—Villeroy and d'Antin on the same side—D'Antin and the Duchess of Burgundy—Annoyance of Madame la Duchesse—Her character—Madame de Villeroy brings about an alliance between the Duchess of Burgundy and the Duchess of Orleans—A league of Italian States against the Emperor proposed—The King misses a great opportunity—Marshal Boufflers offers to defend Lille—His offer accepted—The Allies invest Lille—Braggadocio of Vendôme and his cabal—Vendôme ordered to relieve Lille at any cost—Anxiety of the Court—A battle hourly expected—I bet four pistoles that Lille will be taken without a battle—My bet misrepresented to the King to my injury—Manœuvres of the armies—Fresh outburst of calumnies and lampoons against the Duke of Burgundy pp. 126-149

CHAPTER VIII

1708

Chamillart sent to Flanders—The cabal exalt the Duke of Berry at his brother's expense—Vendôme announces the approaching relief of Lille—The King's intense anxiety—Insensibility of Monseigneur—His memory for trifles—His mind poisoned against his eldest son—His open preference for the Duke of Berry—Insidious calumnies against the Duke of Burgundy—The Duchess and Madame de Maintenon powerless—Stubborn defence of Lille—A huge convoy of the Allies attacked at Wynendaal—The attack beaten off with heavy loss—The town of Lille surrenders, and Boufflers retires to the citadel—Vendôme captures Leffingen—I wish to retire to La Ferté—M. de Beauvilliers dissuades me, but eventually gives way—Death of Tréville—Of Marshal de Noailles—His character—Death of the Maréchal de Villeroy—Her character—Death of Count de Marsan—Of the Countess de Soissons—How she poisoned the Queen of Spain—Return of the Duke of Orleans—The Bishop of Chartres warns me that I have incurred the King's displeasure pp. 150-172

CHAPTER IX

1708

Vendôme attempts to dispute the passage of the Scheldt—Marshal Berwick disapproves of this plan—Vendôme's braggadocio—The Allies cross the Scheldt—A sharp action—Chamillart, with the assent of Madame de Maintenon, conceals the bad news from the King—The Princes ordered to return to Court—I return myself, to meet the Duke of Orleans—Return of the Duke of Burgundy—Scene in Madame de Maintenon's room—Description of her apartments—The Duke of Burgundy's reception by the King and Monseigneur—Marked preference shown for the Duke of Berry—The Duke of Burgundy makes a full report to the King—Mademoiselle Choin unites with Madame de Maintenon in opposition to Vendôme and Chamillart—Gamache—His witty criticism of the two Princes—Surrender of the citadel of Lille—Return of Vendôme—Signs that he was losing ground—Return of Marshal Boufflers—The King showers rewards upon him—Marshal Berwick openly criticises Vendôme—Uneasiness of the cabal—Chamillart proposes a scheme for the recapture of Lille—He imprudently attempts to keep it from Madame de Maintenon—The King reveals the secret to her—Her surprise and anger . . . pp. 173-189

CHAPTER X

1709

Surrender of Ghent—Loss of Bruges and Plassendal—Madame de Maintenon dissuades the King from the attempt on Lille—Extraordinarily severe winter—Vendôme informed that his services would not be required in the following campaign—His insolence abated—A dangerous lunatic—Death of Father de la Chaise—His character—His warning to the King about the Jesuits—Choice of his successor—Father Tellier appointed—His history and character—Description of his person—He wishes for my acquaintance—My embarrassment—Death of Madame d'Heudicourt—Of Madame de Soubise—The Duke de Mortemart—A malicious calumny against me—I refute it angrily—Death of M. d'Avaux—Louvois and the window at Trianon—Death of Madame de Vivonne—Of Boisseuil—His duel with a cheating gambler . . . pp. 190-212

CHAPTER XI

1709

Death of the Prince of Conti—His character—His pious end—His funeral—Etiquette at the funeral ceremonies—M. le Duc in vain attempts some encroachments—Wretched condition of the country—My schemes for a reform of the Government—M. de Chevreuse consults me—He confides to me his own plans, which are almost identical with my own—His astonishment—M. de Beauvilliers in danger of dismissal—Madame de Maintenon's plan for introducing Harcourt to the Council—I discover it accidentally, and warn M. de Beauvilliers—My advice to him—He is restored to favour—Disappointment of Harcourt—Negotiations for peace—Chamillart and Torcy at cross-purposes—Dispute between Chamillart and Desmarests . . . pp. 213-236

CHAPTER XII

1709

Terrible severity of the winter—Fruit-trees and crops ruined—The scarcity of wheat made worse by ill-advised legislation—The Parliaments of Paris and Burgundy offer assistance—The King receives their suggestions with displeasure—General poverty—Bankruptcy of Samuel Bernard—Marshal de Boufflers takes his seat as a Duke—Death of M. le Prince—His character—Anecdotes about him—His eccentricities—Dinner-parties of the dead—The Jesuits disappointed—Their revenge on a young lady—Innovations at the funeral—M. le Duc calumniates me in my absence—Origin of the names of M. le Prince, M. le Duc, Monsieur, Mademoiselle, and Monseigneur . pp. 237-257

CHAPTER XIII

1709

Gradual downfall of Vendôme—He is excluded from Marly—And from Meudon—The cabal confounded—Their servility to the Duchess of Burgundy—Vendôme wishes to go to Spain—The King's refusal—Retirement of M. de la Rochefoucauld—His history and character—Torcy sent on a secret mission to Holland—Malicious joke of Lausun—Marriage in the Lorraine family—Handsome behaviour of the Grand Equerry—Death of Saumery—Of the Prince of Carignan—A deaf-mute taught to speak and read—Death of the Duke de la Trémouille—Harcourt to command in Germany—He lays himself out to please the Duke and Duchess of Burgundy—Rumours of Chamillart's approaching dismissal—Harcourt's sarcastic suggestion—Riots at Paris—The King's statues insulted—Placards and threatening letters—The Duchess de Grammont originates an unfortunate suggestion—Forced sacrifice of private plate—I bring up the rear pp. 258-279

CHAPTER XIV

1709

A storm brewing at Court—Chamillart's mistakes—He neglects Monseigneur, and offends Mademoiselle Choin—Madame de Maintenon makes overtures to Mademoiselle Choin—General murmurs against Chamillart—His services forgotten—The King resolves to dismiss him—Voysin appointed to succeed him—History and character of Voysin and his wife—Chamillart at L'Étang—His calmness under adversity—Voysin snubbed by the King—My position at Court—I resolve to leave it for two years—Parties in the Court—The cabal of the *Seigneurs*—Of the Ministers—Of Meudon—Abandonment of Spain resolved on in the Council—Remonstrance of the Spanish Ambassador—Decision rescinded—An unsatisfactory compromise—I reconcile the Dukes de Chevreuse and Beauvilliers with Marshal Boufflers—My sources of information pp. 280-306

CHAPTER XV

1709

Position of the Duke of Orleans—His licentiousness and reprehensible experiments in magic—He makes an enemy of Madame des Ursins—His acquaintance and intercourse with the English General—The King informs him that he had better not return to Spain—Renaut and Flotte—Arrest of Flotte—Clamour against the Duke of Orleans—His confession to me—Monseigneur's animosity against him—The King decides to bring him to trial—The Chancellor consults me—My advice to him—The project of a trial is dropped—Return of Amelot—The Ministers tremble for their places—I decide to retire to La Ferté—Madame de Saint-Simon consults the Duchess of Burgundy—Her kindness—False reports about me—M. and Madame d'O—Marriage of a Cardinal—Pretensions of the Duchess of Mantua—She has to apologise pp. 307-331

CHAPTER XVI

1709

General scarcity—Serious disturbances in Paris—Marshal Boufflers manages to appease the mob—Campaign in Flanders—Tournai captured by the enemy—Boufflers goes as second-in-command to Villars—Dangerous conspiracy in Lorraine—The Imperialists defeated—Mysterious papers discovered—Battle of Malplaquet—Villars severely wounded—Boufflers' despatches—His generosity to Villars—D'Artagnan made a Marshal—Villars receives a Peerage for his defeat—M. le Duc makes an absurd protest against d'Artagnan's title—Boufflers ungratefully treated—The reason—He asks for the office of Constable of France—Visit of the Elector of Bavaria—Death of the Bishop of Chartres—His character—Duke of Marivaux—His sarcastic remark to the King pp. 332-356

CHAPTER XVII

1709

Destruction of Port-Royal-des-Champs—Explanation of Jansenism—The Bull "Vineam Domini Sabaoth"—The nuns of Port-Royal refuse to sign adhesion to it—Harsh conduct of Father Tellier—The nuns appeal to Rome, and receive a favourable answer—The abbey nevertheless destroyed on another pretext—Visits of Chamillart to La Ferté—A tactless sermon—My return to Paris—I stay at Pontchartrain on the way—The Chancellor urges me not to quit Court—His generous kindness—I determine to seek an audience of the King—Maréchal undertakes to arrange it—The King visits Marshal Villars—Melancholy situation of the Duke of Orleans—I resolve to induce him to separate from his mistress—I consult Marshal Besons, who promises to help—My mother and wife try to dissuade me—My arrangement with Besons—Maréchal induces the King to see me . . . pp. 357-379

CHAPTER XVIII

1710

I visit the Duke of Orleans on New Year's Day—We discuss his situation—I broach the subject of a separation from Madame d'Argenton—His reception of my overtures—I quote Besons' opinion, and he consents to see him—The Chancellor approves my design—Supper with the Duchess de Villeroy—Besons accompanies me next day to the Duke of Orleans—Long expostulations with the Duke—I am forced to tell him of the terrible calumnies against him—He confides to us his suspicions of his wife's fidelity—I am able to disprove the stories against her—The interview broken off, and resumed after dinner—Interrupted by the arrival of Mademoiselle—I find fresh arguments derived from her prospects—He seems less disposed to listen to us—I have to speak very plainly and forcibly—At last he consents to see Madame de Maintenon—Next morning he tells me the result—He suspects me of having made an arrangement with her beforehand—My denial—I confide the secret of my approaching audience to him and Besons—His kind remarks—He sees the King, and is unfavourably received—The King's dislike for surprises—The Duke's arrangement in favour of Madame d'Argenton—I resolve to keep secret my share in the separation . . . pp. 380-409

CHAPTER XIX

1710

I carry the news to the Duchess de Villeroy—Her incredulity and delight—We discuss plans for establishing a better understanding between the Duke and Duchess of Orleans—She begs me to make the acquaintance of the Duchess—The King's supper—I remind him of his promise to give me an audience—He fixes it for next day—The Duke of Orleans deposes Mademoiselle de Chausseraye to convey his decision to Madame d'Argenton—Her history and character—My audience of the King—His manner becomes more gracious as I proceed with my story—I explain my bet about Lille—I complain of M. le Duc—The King accuses me of being touchy about precedence—He listens graciously to my explanation and gives me some fatherly advice—Delight of my friends at the success of my audience—Arrangements for Madame d'Argenton's future—The King is more friendly with the Duke of Orleans—The rupture generally attributed to me, to my great annoyance . . . pp. 410-426

CHAPTER XX

1710

Tact of the Duchess of Orleans—My interview with her—Her charming manners and good sense—The Duke de Noailles makes advances to me—The Duke of Orleans wishes for Besons' services as governor to his eldest son—Jealousy of the Princes of the Blood—The proposed appointment falls through—Lawsuit in the Condé family—M. le Duc

makes a strange announcement—The Duchess of Orleans tries to establish friendly relations between M. du Maine and myself—I evade them politely—An ill-assorted marriage—A dowry of mill-stones—Villars' high favour—His absurdities—He is received as a Peer—His letters of Peerage are offensive to Marshal Boufflers—He has to apologise—Marshal Huxelles and the Abbé de Polignac sent as plenipotentiaries to Gertruydenberg—M. de Beauvilliers makes a confession—"Breaking Polignac's neck"—The King chooses a Protector at Rome—Career of two adventurers—Courcillon—Birth of Louis XV
pp. 427-449

CHAPTER XXI

1710

Death of M. le Duc—His character—Anecdotes about him—Dispute between the King's natural daughters and the Princesses of the Blood—The Duchess of Orleans makes unfounded claims for precedence for her daughter—Madame du Maine's pretensions—The King decides these disputes—Disappointment of the Duchess of Orleans—Her pride and obstinacy—She refuses to let Mademoiselle appear in public—At last gives way reluctantly—Animosity between the Duchess of Orleans and Madame la Duchesse—The King grants distinctions to M. du Maine's children—He begs Monseigneur and the Duke of Burgundy to continue them after his death—Their cold reception of his request—I am forced, like other courtiers, to congratulate M. du Maine—My doing so misrepresented—M. du Maine's unwelcome attentions—Marriage of M. de Vendôme pp. 450-474

CHAPTER XXII

1710

Death of the Duke de Coislin—His peculiarities—Ill-natured interference in a judicial decision—His successor—Absurd objection to his reception as a Peer—The King's reasons for displeasure with the Bishop of Metz—Allows him after a time to succeed his brother as Duke—Death of the Maréchale de la Melleraye—She thinks a man of high birth will not be damned—Her second husband beats her—I am again invited to Marly—Conversation with M. de Beauvilliers about the Duke of Burgundy—At his request I write an essay on the subject—Summary of my essay—Explanation of some parts of it—Character of the Duke of Burgundy—M. de Beauvilliers wishes to show him my essay—I remonstrate—The question referred to M. de Chevreuse—He decides against showing it pp. 475-497

CHAPTER XXIII

1710

An important intrigue—I resolve in my own interest to promote a marriage between the Duke of Berry and Mademoiselle—Difficulties to be overcome—Apathy of the Duke of Orleans—Madame la Duchesse's

daughter Mademoiselle's rival—The Duchess of Burgundy favourable to Mademoiselle—My allies in the scheme—Madame de Lévi—The Duchess de Villeroy—M. and Madame d'O—The Jesuits—M. du Maine—Marshal Boufflers—The Duchess of Burgundy hints at the suitability of the marriage in Monseigneur's presence—His tart remark—The King annoyed by it—The King attempts to retrench expenditure at Marly—Madame la Duchesse's daughters invited there—Mademoiselle also invited—We decide that she had better not go—The Duke of Orleans, after much pressure, consents to write to the King asking his consent to the marriage—I compose a letter for him which he promises to give to the King—Difficulties in the way—The Duke of Orleans' hesitation—At last he delivers the letter—The King consents to the marriage, but asks for time to overcome Monseigneur's opposition pp. 498-519

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

VOL. III

LOUIS DE FRANCE, DUKE DE BOURGOYNE	<i>Frontispiece</i>
BOMBARDMENT OF LIÈGE	FACING PAGE 128
MADAME DE MAINTENON	240
PORT-ROYAL-DES-CHAMPS	400

MEMOIRS OF THE DUKE DE SAINT-SIMON

VOLUME III

CHAPTER I

1707

Opening of the campaign in Flanders—The army placed in imminent peril by Vendôme's sloth—The Duke of Savoy invades the south of France—Capture of Fréjus—Extraordinary conduct of Fleury, the Bishop—Anecdotes of Cardinal Fleury—He is duped by the English Ambassador and by the Emperor—The Duke of Savoy lays siege to Toulon—His failure and retreat—Tessé's absurd despatches—I go to Forges for the waters—Dispute between Dukes and Princes—Surprising sentiments expressed by the King—The King visits d'Antin at Petit-Bourg—An avenue disappears in a night—Madame de Maintenon's jest—Rising fortunes of d'Antin.

THE Duke of Marlborough arrived at The Hague early in the season, and left it again to visit the Electors of Saxony and Brandenburg, and the Duke of Hanover; during which time the Duke of Vendôme was at Mons, undergoing a course of milk diet. The campaign opened about the end of May. Vendôme was nominally under the command of the Elector of Bavaria; in reality he was hardly subject to the King himself. He passed his time, as I have described him in Italy, on his close-stool, at cards, or at table; he had become incapable of anything else, and thought only of enjoying the glory which he had never really earned. He would not trouble himself about his army in the slightest degree, leaving the whole burden to Puysegur throughout the campaign. His carelessness and sloth nearly cost him dear on one occasion. Reluctant, as usual, to leave comfortable quarters, he suddenly found that he had the whole of the enemy's army on his hands; Puysegur had warned

him of their approach, but he would not listen. The peril was imminent, but Puységur could not obtain admission to Vendôme's quarters; his servants had received orders that he was not to be disturbed on any account. Puységur, in despair, went to the Elector, who forced his way in; Vendôme listened to his report, yawned, said it was all very well, but he must have two hours' more sleep, and turned over on the other side. Puységur, however, took upon himself to have the "Boot and Saddle" sounded, and gave orders for an immediate retreat. Vendôme was aroused just as the movement was beginning, and, though still incredulous, was induced to mount his horse. It was high time; the rear-guard was already skirmishing with the enemy; and the affair would have had most serious consequences if the enemy's leading column had not, by great good luck, lost its way in the darkness, and, moreover, been badly handled by its commander, who was the Prince d'Auvergne, the deserter. Later on in the campaign Vendôme was nearly taken prisoner because he would persist in thinking himself safe wherever he found himself comfortable.

Nothing of importance occurred during the campaign; our Generals were not inclined to fight unless compelled to do so, after the unfortunate reverses of the previous years; and Marlborough was awaiting the results of an enterprise in another quarter, which, if successful, would leave France defenceless and exposed to attack on both sides. Vendôme grew tired of the campaign and wished to bring it to an end; he separated his army a week before the enemy broke up his, and there was much public anxiety in consequence; but whatever Vendôme did must be right. He arrived at Court, and had a most gracious reception.

The cause of the enemy's inactivity in Flanders began to reveal itself about the middle of July. Prince Eugène, after expelling us from Italy, had remained there, and now invaded the County of Nice. Our forces were too weak to resist, and retreated behind the Var, which was in flood; the Duke of Savoy entered Nice, having as yet only 6,000 or 7,000 men with him, and the enemy's fleet, consisting of forty men-of-war, began to land artillery. Marlborough expected great results from this enterprise, which he considered sure of success. It had been planned long ago by

the Duke of Savoy, in the war which was terminated by the Peace of Ryswick. He told the officers of the fleet who went to pay their respects to him at Nice that he was glad to see them, but he had expected them at the same place fourteen years ago.

On the 18th of July he entered Fréjus. The Bishop, who now governs us with such complete and undisguised authority under the name of Cardinal Fleury, received him in his episcopal house. So much, indeed, he could not very well avoid; but the Duke of Savoy obtained such influence over him by flattery and cajoleries that the poor man, who was born to be a dupe as well as a deceiver, put on his episcopal robes, presented holy water and incense to the Duke at the door of his cathedral, and himself struck up a Te Deum for the capture of Fréjus. For a few days he enjoyed the mocking caresses with which the Duke expressed his gratitude for an action so contrary to the Bishop's oath and duty as a loyal subject; one indeed, which he would not have dared to ask him to perform. The King's anger, when he heard of it, was such that Torcy, a great friend of the Bishop's, had great difficulty in preventing an open outburst. Fleury, who saw when too late what a mistake he had made, was very angry with Torcy for not concealing it from the King; as if it were possible to prevent such an extraordinary action, performed so publicly, from coming to the King's ears by a hundred channels. After this he always kept up a secret correspondence with the Duke of Savoy; and that Prince, who never missed a chance of picking up anything, however useless and insignificant it might appear at the moment, used to answer his letters in such a way as to flatter his foolish vanity.

When he had become Prime Minister, with the unbounded authority which he has now wielded for sixteen years,¹ he did not forget either his rancour against Torcy or his devotion to the Duke of Savoy. While still only the King's tutor, he used to report regularly to the Duke everything which concerned his studies; he told me so himself, adding that the Duke was the King's grandfather and almost his only relation, and it was his duty to do so. As Prime

¹ This fixes the date when Saint-Simon was writing or revising this portion of his Memoirs. Cardinal Fleury became Prime Minister in 1726.

Minister he consulted him about public business, and told him everything. This also I heard from his own lips, though he was not quite so expansive as he had been about the King's education. "The Duke of Savoy is the King's grandfather," he said to me again; "he is the ablest Prince in Europe; he is my intimate friend; he wanted to make me his son's tutor, and he has confided everything to me for a long time. He must take an interest in the King's welfare. Where could I find a better counsellor? or one whom I could consult more naturally?" In the end, however, he perceived that, though he confided everything to the Duke of Savoy, the confidence was by no means mutual; and that the Duke, in fact, was abusing it and cruelly deceiving him. He held his tongue, not wishing the public to know how he had been taken in; but he broke off his correspondence with the Duke, and never forgave him. He paid him out when he was imprisoned by his son. He would not allow our King to take the smallest step on behalf of this grandfather, this only relation, and could not disguise his joy at seeing himself avenged. This is not the place to speak of his ministry, which was subsequent to the limit I have assigned to these Memoirs; but I cannot omit one or two curious anecdotes which may perhaps naturally find a place here.

One of them relates to the famous affair which so nearly caused his overthrow. He had made M. le Duc Prime Minister at the death of the Duke of Orleans, in order to give him the appearance of power while keeping the reality for himself. He was always present when M. le Duc had interviews with the King on business. M. le Duc, prompted by his celebrated mistress, Madame de Prie, wished to oust him, and transact business with the King without him; and, as he had arranged the King's recent marriage, he had great influence with the Queen. She arranged that the King should come to her room a little before his usual hour for business. M. le Duc went there with his portfolio, while the Bishop of Fréjus was waiting in the King's room. After about an hour the Bishop grew tired of waiting, and sent to the Queen's rooms to know what had detained the King so long. He was informed that the King was working in her private room with M. le Duc. Knowing how strong his influence was with the King, he went off to his own house, and next day to Issy. Sir Robert Walpole was

ruling England then, as he rules it to-day ; and his brother Horace¹ was Ambassador here. Next day Horace went to visit the Bishop at Issy, while it was still uncertain whether he was irrevocably dismissed, or whether the King would retain his services in spite of M. le Duc. The Bishop was so much touched by a visit at such a crisis that he thought the cunning Englishman was a real friend. But the Ambassador risked nothing by it ; if the dismissal of the Bishop of Fréjus held good, M. le Duc could do nothing to him ; whereas, if he returned to power, this friendly action might be turned to good account.

When the Bishop became Prime Minister, after overthrowing M. le Duc and Madame de Prie, whom he never forgave for the fright they had given him, he abandoned himself entirely to the English. It was obvious to everybody that he was their dupe ; I resolved at last to speak to him about it, for, as will be seen later on, I was in a position to do so. Accordingly, one day I told him my ideas on the subject, and pointed out the serious objections to his policy, together with many other remarks about public affairs which I need not mention here. On public business in general he spoke freely, but with regard to his confidence in Horace Walpole and his brother, the English influence generally, he merely smiled. " You do not know all," he said ; " are you aware what Horace did for me ? " And thereupon told me the story of his visit, which he said was an heroic act, and an indisputable proof of sincerity and attachment. " But that is not all," he went on ; " do you know that he shows me all the despatches he receives, that I dictate those he sends out, and that he writes nothing without my approval ? This is a secret which I am willing to confide to you. Horace is my intimate friend ; he trusts me blindly. He is a very able man, and thoroughly in accord with his brother Robert, who is one of the ablest men in Europe ; we consult each other, we act together, and let people say what they please." I was stupefied with astonishment, not so much at what he said, but at the air of complacency and self-satisfaction with which he said it. I asked him how he could be sure that Horace was not receiving and writing double despatches, and deceiving him the whole time. With another self-satisfied smile he replied : " I know him well, he is the frankest

¹ Uncle of the letter-writer,

and most honest of men ; and no one is less capable of deceiving anybody ” ; and thereupon he proceeded to relate several of the sayings and doings with which Horace kept him in a good humour. The end of it was that, having made use of France against Spain, in the interests of their own commerce and aggrandisement, his friends the Walpoles laughed at him openly in Parliament when the short war of 1733 broke out, and exposed all the blunders which they had made our Prime Minister commit during the past six years,¹ to their profit and to our great detriment. He was beside himself with anger, but he did not mend his ways.

He then devoted himself to the Duke of Lorraine, the born enemy of France, and through him to the Emperor. The latter, full of his own grandeur, and naturally reserved, did not respond freely enough at first to please the Duke of Lorraine, who had a more intimate knowledge of our Court ; but, after a time, he was persuaded to write to Cardinal Fleury with his own hand, assuring him of his esteem and confidence, and expressing a wish to be guided by his advice. The Cardinal was highly delighted ; perhaps he had never heard how Charles V cajoled Cardinal Wolsey in a similar manner. He was more infatuated than ever with the Emperor and the Duke of Lorraine ; the latter especially, since he thought it was to him that he owed the Emperor's confidence. He kept up a constant correspondence with the Emperor, which passed through the hands of the Duke of Lorraine, without any of our Ministers, or his most confidential secretaries, knowing anything about it.

I was silly enough to warn him again that he was being deceived. With the same complacent air he confided to me the secret of his personal correspondence with the Emperor, “ and,” said he, “ when I write to him I tell him straight out what I think ; he answers me in the most friendly and familiar way, and treats me with the greatest deference.” The short war did not make the scales fall from his eyes ; he fancied that the peace was brought about entirely by his personal influence. He began telling me all about the negotiations one day at Issy, as I was on my way back from La Ferté. “ And what about Lorraine ? ” I said ; “ have not you insisted on it being given to us ? ” He looked confused, and told me that Campredon had gone a little too far, and signed contrary to his order. “ Well, but what

¹ This statement seems to be quite unfounded.

about it ? ” I repeated. “ Why, as for Lorraine,” he said, “ there was no persuading them to give way ; Campredon signed the treaty, and, as the thing was done, we would not disavow him.”

Then I represented to him as forcibly as I could the consequences of the guarantee which he was giving to the Pragmatic Sanction ; how dangerous it would be to have an Emperor who should also be Duke of Lorraine, in a position to fortify that State, and maintain troops there, cutting us off from Alsace and Franche-Comté ; so that, unless we made a new fortified frontier in Champagne and the Three-Bishoprics, the Emperor would be able to march to Paris whenever he pleased. I spoke at considerable length, using many other arguments ; he listened most attentively, without once interrupting me, and when I had finished remained for some time silent and thoughtful. At last he broke the silence to speak of something else. A month later I heard that Lorraine was ceded to France completely and for ever. I was delighted, and I confess I thought it was my doing ; but I took care never to let a single word escape me on the subject ; and, strange to say, Lorraine was never again mentioned between the Cardinal and myself. This digression has led me far enough, perhaps too far ; I must now return to the events which were occurring in Provence.

Tessé, with twenty-nine battalions which he had got together, hurried from Dauphiné to Toulon, where Saint-Pater, the Governor, had only two battalions, with four others made up of sailors. The defences of Toulon were worthless ; nothing had been done there up to that time. Languedoc was disaffected, and the two provinces had not a single fortified place. It was determined to throw up an immense entrenchment on the heights of St. Catherine, to keep the enemy as far from Toulon as possible ; and officers and soldiers worked with the greatest zeal. The sailors of the fleet also did wonders ; the guns were removed from the ships, and some of them sunk to block the entrance to the harbour ; as it was foreseen that it would be impossible to prevent the rest from being set on fire by shells, seventeen of them were put under water. They were raised afterwards, but were a great loss at the time.

The Duke of Savoy had paid a visit to the English fleet before Nice, to ask for the money which had been promised

him. The English were afraid of running short of money, and disputed for a whole day beyond the date fixed for the departure ; at last, seeing that the Duke was determined not to move till he had been paid, they gave him a million. That single day's delay saved Toulon, and France with it ; it gave time for twenty-one additional battalions to enter the place. The Duke of Savoy and Prince Eugène arrived at Valette, one league from Toulon, on the 26th of July, and on the 30th our outposts were attacked. Contrary winds, however, prevented the landing of stores and artillery, and there was great scarcity in the enemy's army, which lost many men by desertion. Our Government endeavoured to turn the delay to good account by sending strong detachments from the armies of Flanders, Germany, and Spain, but some of them could not arrive in less than fifty days' marching. Tessé, however, received twenty additional battalions ; and on the 13th of August the King announced that if the Duke of Savoy persisted in his attempt the Duke of Burgundy would go to Provence to take the field against him ; the Duke of Berwick was summoned from Spain to act as his second in command. The Duke of Berry was to go as a volunteer. It was calculated that when all the reinforcements had arrived the Duke of Burgundy's army would be equal to that of the enemy.

In the meantime the enemy landed guns, and began an attack on Fort St. Louis ; but on the 15th of August Tessé attacked their trenches opposite our entrenchments on the heights of St. Catherine, and carried them in three quarters of an hour, with little loss. Three hundred men were taken prisoners, with sixty officers ; all their guns were spiked, and their trenches demolished. Fort St. Louis, however, had to surrender at last for want of water ; the enemy's bombardment did little harm to the town ; but some galleys bombarded the port for twenty-four hours, and burnt two ships of fifty guns.

After these fruitless attempts, seeing the arrival of reinforcements, and hearing that others were advancing by forced marches, the enemy judged that their enterprise was hopeless. The entrenchment of St. Catherine appeared impregnable, and they were dismayed at the spread of sickness and desertion among their troops. On the night of the 22nd of August they began their retreat, having re-embarked nearly all their guns, but leaving behind a

great number of shells. The Duke of Savoy retired in good order, but very rapidly, Tessé following him up with a small force. The peasants killed all the enemy's stragglers and marauders; they were in despair at seeing their hopes cast to the ground. The people of Provence could not be induced to make the slightest resistance when the Duke of Savoy crossed the Var to invade France; they refused all supplies, money, and militia; saying openly that they did not care whom they belonged to, for, whatever the Duke of Savoy might do, they could not be more miserable than they were already. That Prince, who heard of it, distributed hand-bills announcing that he had come to deliver them from bondage, and would take nothing from them without payment. He kept his word faithfully during the month he stayed in Provence; Fréjus, however, was plundered, only the Bishop being spared, as a slight return for his *Te Deum*. From the moment, however, that the retreat began the affection of the people was no longer required, and the former wise and politic method of treating them came to an end; there was much plundering, and the peasants, seeing that there was no prospect of a change of masters, hung on the skirts of the enemy's army and killed all they could lay hands on. Tessé reoccupied Nice, and went on to Villefranche, as it was feared that the enemy might attack that place and Monaco; but neither was in any danger.

The first tidings of this important deliverance were brought to Marly on the morning of the 26th of August by a courier whom Langeron, the commander of the naval forces, had despatched to Pontchartrain. Tessé, knowing nothing of his departure, sent off his son a few hours later, with despatches for Chamillart, who was at L'Étang. Chamillart at once took him to the King, who was at supper; they were both much mortified to find that their news had been forestalled. Chamillart was furious with Pontchartrain, who, he considered, had encroached on his functions; he said, as the news did not concern the navy, no courier ought to have been despatched, and at any rate Pontchartrain ought not himself to have brought the news to the King, but should have confided it to him, and let him carry out the duties of his office. There never was a better illustration of the common absurdity of judging things on personal grounds, and not on their merits, than

was afforded by this affair ; one can hardly say that the Court took sides regarding it, for there was not a single voice raised on behalf of Pontchartrain ; whereas Chamillart, who on this occasion was grossly in the wrong, had them all on his side. I was on friendly terms with both ; but Chamillart was my personal friend, whereas Pontchartrain was so only for the sake of his father, his mother, and his wife ; nevertheless, I was grieved at the injustice with which the latter was treated. Blame is too mild a word ; any one would have supposed that he had committed a crime, and deserved the most severe punishment.

Although the general anxiety and alarm respecting the invasion had been terrible, nobody was grateful for being relieved from it nearly a whole day sooner, because it was Pontchartrain who had done it ; he was generally detested, and so he was regarded as an usurper ; while Chamillart, who was popular, was considered to have been defrauded of his rights. Nobody had sense enough to reflect how angry a private person would be with a servant who should leave him in cruel suspense for eight or ten hours without any necessity, and then calmly excuse himself on the plea that he had been waiting for another servant whose duty it was to bring the news. The strangest part of it was that the King, the person chiefly concerned, whose interest it was to prevent a bad precedent being established for similar cases in the course of the war, had not the courage to decide between them, and did not utter a word. Such was his weakness for his Ministers. Pontchartrain had nothing for it but to hold his tongue, and wait till the storm had blown over.

I must mention another absurdity in connection with this invasion. Tessé was entrusted with the defence of Provence ; nothing was ready in that province, because no attack had been expected ; he was, in fact, responsible for the safety of the whole country, for powerful armies under skilful commanders were only waiting for the success of this invasion of our disaffected provinces to attack us on all sides. It would naturally be supposed that a General in his situation would be overwhelmed with anxiety, and not much inclined to laugh. Such, however, were not Tessé's sentiments ; like a great man, superior to such trifling distractions, he saw a good opportunity for a joke ; and, stranger still, Pontchartrain found time to laugh at it.

By every mail Tessé wrote him a full account of the enemy's movements and everything that went on in our camp, in the style of Don Quixote; calling himself the sorrowful squire, Sancho Pança; and everything in his reports was adapted to the adventures of that romance. Pontchartrain showed me his letters with great amusement; it must be confessed that they were extremely funny, and that, while giving an accurate account of all that happened, he kept up the burlesque of the romance with a lively wit for which I should never have given him credit. But I could not restrain my astonishment at seeing a man mixing up such nonsense with his official reports to a Secretary of State in so dangerous a crisis; and I was no less surprised at the admiration expressed by the Secretary of State himself, who appeared to think it an excellent joke. Tessé kept up this mock-heroic burlesque till the invasion was over. I could not have believed it if I had not seen it.

The Duke of Marlborough could hardly credit the failure of the Duke of Savoy's enterprise. He had conceived vast designs which depended on its success, and were now dashed to the ground. The Duke of Savoy thought only of restoring the condition of his army, which had suffered heavily, and was greatly diminished in numbers. In October he captured the fort of Susa, which had only a weak garrison; but his exploits ended there. A month later Tessé arrived at Court, where he did not meet with a very favourable reception. We were seated at table at Meudon when he came to pay his respects to Monseigneur; I never saw any one received so coldly; but his friends soon put him in the saddle again. Médavid remained in Provence to command in his stead.

The rejoicings for the deliverance of Provence were mingled with those for the birth of the Prince of the Asturias; but they were soon abated by the loss of the kingdom of Naples and Sicily, which it was impossible to preserve. The town of Gaeta held out some time for the King of Spain, but eventually fell through treachery.

In September a plot was discovered in Geneva to hand over the town to the Duke of Savoy. Many magistrates of that little Republic were implicated in it, and some were executed. Among them were some who were so bitter against their own country that from the scaffold they called out words of encouragement to the other conspirators,

telling them to fear nothing, but persevere boldly in their plot, for they had mentioned no names. The Duke of Savoy, like his forefathers, had already made several attempts to get hold of Geneva, which they have always considered the most valuable acquisition they could make.

I went this summer to Forges, to get rid if possible, of a tertian fever, for which I had tried quinine in vain. While I was there I heard of a new encroachment on the part of the Princes of the Blood. Though the King had reduced them to impotence, and degraded them as much as he could, they took advantage of his weakness for his bastards, whom he had raised to their level ; they were always on the watch for fresh distinctions, which they were allowed to obtain in order that the bastards might share them. They had always been impatient of the marked superiority of rank accorded to the Grandsons of France, and one of the most conspicuous signs of this superiority was manifested at the King's Communion.

After the elevation of the Host a folding-chair was placed at the foot of the altar, and over it was thrown a large napkin hanging down before and behind. At the Pater-noster the Almoner on duty rose and told the King what Dukes were present in the chapel. The King named two of them, always the two senior ; and the Almoner at once went up to them and bowed. While the priest was communicating the King rose and went to kneel behind the folding-chair, holding the napkin in his hand ; then the two Dukes who had been warned followed him, with the Captain of the Guard, and took the two corners of the napkin, the senior on the King's right, the junior on his left, while the two Almoners on duty for the quarter held the other two corners ; all four kneeling, and the Captain of the Guard kneeling alone, behind the King. Having received the Communion, the King remained kneeling for a short time, and then returned to his place, followed by the two Dukes. If a Son of France was present he held the right-hand corner of the napkin, nobody holding the other ; and when the Duke of Orleans was there, in the absence of a Son of France, he did the same. If a Prince of the Blood was present, he did not serve with the Duke of Orleans ; but if a Prince of the Blood was there alone, one Duke was warned instead of two, and he held the left-hand corner. The King used to name the Dukes to show that he could choose any of them ;

but, as a matter of fact, he always named the two senior, and I remember that, one day, as I was walking into the chapel before him, I saw him look at the Duke de la Force and then whisper to Marshal de Noailles, who immediately came and asked me who was senior, the Duke de la Force or myself.

The Princes of the Blood were offended at the distinction accorded to the Duke of Orleans, and determined to avenge themselves by usurping the same superiority over the Dukes. They went about it very quietly, and at the Feast of the Assumption this year M. le Duc served alone at the King's Communion, none of the Dukes present being warned to serve with him. I heard of it at Forges; it had caused great surprise, as the Duke de la Force and Marshal de Boufflers were both present. I wrote to the latter that such a thing had never happened before, that I had repeatedly served with Princes of the Blood, and with M. le Duc himself, and that the fact could easily be verified by looking at the registers kept by Desgranges, Master of the Ceremonies. But the Dukes, indolent and careless of their privileges as usual, did not venture to remonstrate. I had foreseen that it would be so; and I wrote to the Duke of Orleans in Spain, saying all that I could to stimulate him to keep up his superiority over the Princes of the Blood, and not allow them to claim equality with himself by usurping a similar superiority over the Dukes. When he returned from Spain he spoke to the King about it; M. le Duc declared that, so far as he was concerned, it was not intentional. The Duke of Orleans overcame his natural timidity with the King so far as to press his point; the King replied that it was the fault of the Dukes, who had not come forward. But how could they come forward without being warned? and how would the King have taken it if they had? In short, nothing came of the remonstrance, and the precedent was established.

Angry, and in no hurry to return to Court, I went from Forges to La Ferté. Madame de Saint-Simon joined me there, from Rambouillet, whither the Duchess of Orleans had asked her and some other ladies to accompany her. We stayed three weeks at La Ferté. The Court was at Fontainebleau, and I did not want to go there; but Madame de Saint-Simon was wiser, and made me go. I did not pay my respects to the King till the second day after my

arrival, and, having made my bow, I retired at once. Apparently he noticed both circumstances, for nobody paid more attention to such trifles ; and he always had exact information concerning the arrivals of courtiers at Fontainebleau, where he made a particular point of having a numerous and distinguished Court. Next day, after dinner, I met him in his antechamber, on his way to Madame de Maintenon's room. He immediately made inquiries about my health, and so on, to which I replied respectfully but briefly, and passed on without following him. But I was at once called back ; the King was still speaking to me. This time I did not venture to leave him, but followed him where he was going. He was always conscious when he had done an act of injustice, or offended any one, and often sought to make amends by conferring a slight distinction, and behaving with what in a private person would be called politeness. This story has brought me to Fontainebleau rather before the proper time ; I must now go back a little. I will merely add that, though I was often urged to attend the King's Communion afterwards, I could not make up my mind to do so, and never went there again.

A short time before the Court went to Fontainebleau a scene took place at Marly which caused a great sensation, for, to any one who knew the King, the sentiments he expressed on this occasion were astounding. All the ladies of the party had at that time the honour of taking their meals, morning and evening, in the small saloon which separated the King's apartments from those of Madame de Maintenon. The King had one table, at which all the Sons of France and the Princesses of the Blood sat, with the exception of the Duke of Berry, the Duke of Orleans, and the Princess of Conti, who always sat at Monseigneur's table, even when he was out hunting. There was a third, smaller, table ; all three were round, and the ladies were at liberty to sit at whichever they preferred. The Princesses of the Blood placed themselves at the King's right and left in the order of their rank ; Duchesses and other Princesses sat next to them, but not in any particular order, only no other ladies were mixed with them ; the circle of the table was completed by untitled ladies, among whom Madame de Maintenon sat when she dined there ; but she had given it up some time ago. She had a private table served in her own room, to which two or three of her particular friends

were admitted, almost always the same ladies. After dinner, the King used to go to Madame de Maintenon's room, and sit in an arm-chair near her in her corner, which was formed by a sofa closed in on three sides; the Princesses of the Blood sat on *tabourets* near them, and the remainder of the ladies who had the privilege of being admitted sat at a distance. The time the King stayed there varied, according to whether he was amused by the conversation of the Princesses, or whether he had some business to attend to; when he retired he passed in front of all the ladies, who then went out, except a few of Madame de Maintenon's intimate friends. This explanation is necessary to make my story intelligible.

At one of these dinners it happened, I do not know how, that Madame de Torcy found herself next to Madame, and above the Duchess de Duras, who had come in after her. Madame de Torcy did indeed offer to give up her place, but it was no longer the fashion to accept such an offer, and the matter passed off in compliments. The King, in the meantime, arrived and took his place at table; the others were about to sit down, when the King cast his eyes towards Madame's side, with an expression of grave surprise, which so embarrassed Madame de Torcy that she again offered to change places with Madame de Duras. The latter again declined, though this time Madame de Torcy would have been very glad if she had accepted her offer. I must observe that it so happened that Madame de Duras was the only titled lady on that side of the table; all the others had chanced to take the other, where the Duchess of Burgundy and Madame la Duchesse were sitting. During the whole of dinner the King hardly took his eyes off Madame's two neighbours, and scarcely spoke a word; his face wore an angry look, which drew the attention of everybody, and caused a good deal of embarrassment even to Madame de Duras.

After dinner the King went as usual into Madame de Maintenon's room. He had hardly sat down when he told Madame de Maintenon that he had just witnessed a piece of insolence (that was his very word) which made him so angry that he had been unable to eat. He told the story, and said that such presumption would have been intolerable even in a lady of quality, no matter how high her birth might be, but that as for a petty *bourgeoise*, an Arnauld,

married to a Colbert, he had been a dozen times on the point of ordering her to leave the table, and had only refrained out of consideration for her husband. Thereupon he spoke of the genealogy of the Arnauld family, a topic which was soon exhausted ; and went on to that of the Colberts, saying that they were so silly as to try to make out that they were descended from a King of Scotland ; that M. Colbert had worried him into writing to the King of England to ask him to cause researches to be made in Scotland for proofs of his descent. But the King of England had replied that though he had done so, purely to oblige him, he had discovered nothing except that some people of the lowest class bore a name remotely resembling Colbert ; and assured him that his Minister had been deceived by his vanity.

This story he told angrily, with many disparaging epithets ; after which he went on to talk in a strain still more astonishing to any one who knew him. He said it was very silly of Madame de Duras not to take Madame de Torcy by the arm and turn her out of her place ; and became so excited that the Duchess of Burgundy, fearing lest he should speak roughly to Madame de Duras, began to make excuses for her, on the ground of her youth, saying that it was more becoming in a person of her age to be gentle and unassuming. The King replied that Madame de Duras must indeed be good-natured to put up with such conduct from any untitled lady, much more from a petty *bourgeoise* who ought to feel highly honoured by being admitted to his table, and to the society of ladies of quality. This impertinence of Madame de Torcy, he added, was enough to show her want of breeding ; there were wives of Secretaries of State who were ladies by birth, and they were careful never to go beyond their proper position. Madame de Pontchartrain, for instance, he said, was well-born, and might mingle with ladies of quality ; but she always took the lowest place, and that with such natural modesty and politeness that it added infinitely to the esteem in which she was held, and procured for her attentions to which she was no longer entitled since her marriage.

After this panegyric on Madame de Pontchartrain, in which the King seemed to take pleasure, he proceeded to put the finishing touch to the amazement of his hearers ; for he began to exalt the dignity of the Dukes ; and, for the first time in his life, showed that he was not ignorant of

their greatness, nor of its close connection with the dignity and majesty of his own crown. He said the rank of Duke was the first in the State; he could find no higher honour to bestow on his own family, and it was the greatest reward for the most distinguished nobles. He went so far as to confess that his necessities had sometimes compelled him to raise to this high pitch of honour (this was his own expression) persons not entitled to it by birth, though always against his will; but the dignity was not therefore degraded in the slightest degree, and he wished it to be understood that he should consider any one who refused to give the Dukes the honours which were their due as wanting in respect to himself. Those were his very words. Then, after speaking of the high birth of the Duke and Duchess de Duras, he went on to deplore the misfortunes which had compelled so many Dukes to marry beneath them; but added angrily that ladies of the highest quality were not to think that they might fail in respect to a Duchess because she was not of good birth; her dignity was the same, and nothing could excuse any neglect of what was due to it. All this was said with vehemence, and in such strong language that the King seemed to be quite a different person. He wound up by asking the Princesses which of them would tell Madame de Torcy how impertinent he considered her conduct to have been. They looked at each other in silence, whereupon the King said angrily that Madame de Torcy must be told by somebody, and went off to his own room.

Next day, after dinner, the King again recurred to the subject, till the Duchess of Burgundy, to pacify him, told him that, though she had not liked to speak to Madame de Torcy herself, she had spoken to Madame de Bouzols, Torcy's sister, and begged her to warn Madame de Torcy. The King replied, with an air of relief, that he was very glad to hear it, because it would save him from the disagreeable necessity of scolding Torcy for his wife's conduct, which he had resolved to do rather than that she should not hear what he thought of it. Torcy and his wife were very indignant and hardly appeared for several days. They both apologised to Madame de Duras, and Torcy wrote a respectful letter to the King, expressing his regret that Madame de Torcy should have incurred his displeasure on account of an incident which was really not her fault. He explained that she had twice offered her place to the

Duchess de Duras, who would not take it, and wound up by assurances that she knew what was due to persons of higher rank, and had no intention of pushing herself forward. The King declared himself satisfied so far as he was concerned ; but, without using strong language, gave him to understand that his wife would do well to be prudent, and mind how she behaved in future ; so that, on the whole, the affair ended without giving Torcy too much annoyance.

As may be supposed, it caused a good deal of talk, and the Secretaries of State and Ministers who had climbed so high were not very well pleased. The best of it was that there were ladies of quality who took offence at what the King had said about them, and they made a great show of obsequious deference to ladies of title. The King remarked it, and signified his approval ; he spoke angrily of those who did not follow their example ; and since that time he was always careful to mark the distinction between ladies and gentlemen of title and others. As regards the ducal rank and dignity in other respects, however, he did his best to degrade them throughout his reign, both before and after this business. I heard of the affair at Forges ; when I returned I heard the most minute details from the Duchess of Burgundy's ladies ; and, as they were not Duchesses themselves, I could not suspect them of exaggerating anything.

A week before the departure for Fontainebleau, the Duchess of Burgundy, with the Duke and many ladies, went to ride in the Bois de Boulogne, which was thronged with carriages full of people who had come from Paris to see her. In the evening she alighted at La Muette, where Armenonville gave her a magnificent supper. During the whole of the repast the Duchess was served by Madame d'Armenonville, who remained standing behind her. After supper the place was beautifully illuminated all of a sudden ; violins and other instruments were heard, and the party danced and walked about till two in the morning. The Bavarian Dauphiness had been served in the same way by Madame de Fourcy, at the dinner given to the King at the Hôtel de Ville, on the occasion of his returning thanks at Notre-Dame for his recovery from a serious operation. There was no question of Madame de Fourcy being seated at table any more than for Madame d'Armenonville at La Muette. The most distinguished persons of the gown have never ventured to aspire to such an honour.

Two days later the King caused Mademoiselle, daughter of the Duke of Orleans, to dine with him at his *grand couvert* at Versailles, and to accompany him into his private room afterwards. This distinction caused some remark. Princesses of the Blood do not dine at the *grand couvert* ; it is an honour reserved for Sons, Daughters, and Grandchildren of France. Occasionally, however, in the interval between the death of the Bavarian Dauphiness and the marriage of the Duchess of Burgundy, the King had asked his daughters, the Princess of Conti and Madame la Duchesse, to dine at the *grand couvert* ; it was a particular favour to them, which made Madame la Princesse and the other Princess of Conti very angry. To appease these ladies, the King asked them also once or twice, and afterwards asked nobody who was not entitled to it ; having done this honour to these two Princesses, he wished apparently to do the same for Mademoiselle, who was his granddaughter, without making a precedent of it.

On the 6th of September the eldest son of the late Count de Tonnerre, while out shooting with the second son of Amelot, who was Ambassador in Spain at the time, shot his companion dead. Madame de Tonnerre made her son take to flight, and then came to ask the King to pardon him, assuring him that it had been an accident, and that young Amelot was a great friend of her son's. At the same time Amelot's sister, Madame de Vaubecourt, came to ask the King not to pardon her nephew's assassin ; who, she said, had taken deliberate aim and killed him purposely. Young Amelot was the hope of his family ; as clever and good-looking as his elder brother was the contrary ; the latter, however, afterwards became a *président-à-mortier*. Tonnerre was a sort of oaf who led an obscure life, and was very eccentric. He received his pardon a month later, went to the Bastille for a year, gave 10,000 livres to the poor, to be distributed by Cardinal de Noailles, and was forbidden under heavy penalties to appear in any place, public or private, where Amelot happened to be. He served little with the army, though he showed some bravery ; married a daughter of Blansac, and now spends his life in his room or in the country, so that nobody ever sees him.

The disgrace of Marshal de Villeroy, at whose house the King often stayed on his way to or from Fontainebleau, and the death of Madame de Montespan, were the causes of an

innovation which had considerable after-effects. Madame de Maintenon was no longer afraid of d'Antin ; she began to look upon him with favour as the brother of the bastards who were so dear to her ; as soon as he had lost his mother she considered him as a man who might safely be brought into closer contact with the King, since his vices would always give them a hold over him, and his meanness might be turned to good account. It was decided that the King should sleep at Petit-Bourg, d'Antin's house, on the 13th of September.

It is incredible what trouble d'Antin took to pay his court on the occasion of this visit ; he tried to please everybody, even the lowest servants. While Madame de Maintenon was absent at St. Cyr he bribed her servants to let him see her room, and took an exact record of its arrangement, the furniture, the books, even the careless way in which they were scattered about the table, and, if there were any with markers in them, even their position was noted. When she arrived at Petit-Bourg she found her room arranged exactly like the one she had left at Versailles, even to the smallest details, and this refined compliment was much talked about. D'Antin found time to visit every one of his guests in his own room, even some of the servants ; and did the honours of Petit-Bourg to each of them as if he had no other guest. The King arrived early, and walked about the place, admiring it very much. He approved of everything except an avenue of horse-chestnut trees, which was a great ornament to the grounds, but shut out the view from his windows. D'Antin said not a word ; but next morning, when the King looked out, the avenue had disappeared completely, and there were no more traces of its removal than if it had never existed. No one had heard any noise or confusion ; the trees had simply vanished, and the ground was so even and tidy that it seemed as though fairies had been at work. Madame de Maintenon could not refrain from a rather bitter jest when she was starting for Fontainebleau next day. She said it was lucky for her that she had done nothing to displease the King the night before, for in that case it was evident that d'Antin would have sent her away, to sleep on the high-road.

D'Antin replied like a man of wit, and drew no bad augury for his fortunes from her remark. He looked upon this flying visit to his house as the first-fruits of what he

had always hoped for since his mother's death. A fortnight later he had another proof that he was right ; Sourdis, whom I have already mentioned, died at his place of retirement in Guyenne, and the governorship of the Orleanais became vacant. D'Antin had some property in that district, which is very extensive ; he applied for the vacant post, and it was given him immediately. He was so delighted that he exclaimed that the spell was broken, and, since the King was beginning to show favour to him, he had no fear for the future. His wife, the stupidest and silliest of women, went about telling everybody that from henceforth her husband would go ahead at a great pace. The Court was not particularly well pleased with these jubilant anticipations, for it was feared that there might be some foundation for them ; and indeed, as the sequel will show, they were verified to the letter. The Court of St. Germain came to Fontainebleau on the 23rd of September, and stayed there till the 6th of October. The King remained there till the 25th, and then returned to Versailles as he had come, by Petit-Bourg.

CHAPTER II

1707—1708

Chamillart and Cattinat—Death of the Count d'Auvergne—Of Moreau—Of the Archbishops of Rouen and Aix—Of Madame d'Arma nac—The Grand Equerry looks out for another wife—Marshal de Villeroy resigns his Captaincy of the Guard—His appointment given to his son—Madame de Thianges—Her wit and pride—A snub for the King—Chamillart's failing health—He seeks a great marriage for his son, and makes a grievous mistake—He resigns the office of Controller-General—Desmarets appointed—Outcry against the Duke de Beauvilliers—Death of Langlée—Of Montbron—His arms—The origin of his family.

My readers will remember what took place between the King, Chamillart, and Cattinat at the time when the King wished to avail himself of Cattinat's services again, after having recalled him from Italy in disgrace. Though Cattinat had behaved on that occasion with marvellous self-restraint, Chamillart could not forgive him the fright he had been in of losing his office. Tessé, who was Chamillart's very humble servant so long as he retained his power, lost no opportunity of urging him to ruin Cattinat. It is true that he owed his own rise entirely to Cattinat, and we have seen with what ingratitude he repaid his benefactor when they were in Italy. I have said more than once, and I repeat it here, because it is invariably true, that it is far more difficult to forgive persons whom we have injured than those who have injured us ; that is why Tessé never spared Cattinat, who had spared him when a word, which the King urged him to speak out, would have ruined him. We have seen how Cattinat—prevented from achieving any success on the Rhine by Chamillart's refusal to supply him with sufficient troops,—had retired to St. Gratien ; and, refusing the Order, spent his life in silence and solitude.

The King was so much alarmed by the invasion of Provence that he departed from his usual practice, and sought for good advice wherever it could be procured. He caused

Cattinat to be consulted secretly ; and he sent the King a memorandum on the subject, which pleased him. I do not know whether the King had any idea of employing Cattinat again in the field ; certainly Cattinat had not the slightest wish to be employed ; but, however that may be, he sent for him to Versailles. Cattinat went there accordingly ; he had not seen Chamillart since his return from the army of the Rhine in 1702. The King had just finished dressing ; as soon as he saw Cattinat he said he wanted to speak to him, and, taking him into his cabinet, he discussed his memorandum with him in a very gracious manner. It was a trap which he had laid for him ; after a time he told Cattinat, in so many words, that he had to ask him a favour, which he hoped would not be refused. As Cattinat was endeavouring to make a suitable reply, the King interrupted him : " Marshal," he said, " your misunderstanding with Chamillart grieves me ; I should like to see you on good terms again. He is a man who is necessary to me, and whom I like ; I have also a great regard and esteem for you." The Marshal replied that he would go immediately to call on Chamillart. " No," said the King, " that is not necessary ; he is in the next room, and I will call him." He did so, and the reconciliation took place at once in the King's presence. As soon as Chamillart had returned to his quarters Cattinat went to call on him. As he was coming away Chamillart reconducted him (as was his due) to the very end of his long suite of rooms, in spite of Cattinat's efforts to prevent him. When they parted the Marshal said, " You have insisted, sir, on paying me this compliment ; but I beg that it may be the last time. I wish you to consider me as a private friend, and I should like the public to know that we are on that footing." In any one else this would have been a piece of courtier-like flattery ; in Cattinat, who had no intention of getting anything by it, it was merely the expression of his natural modesty and his sincere desire to comply with the King's wishes.

A few days later the King had a rather long consultation with Chamillart and Tessé. It was announced soon afterwards that Tessé would not be given another command. He gave out that he expected to have to undergo an operation for fistula ; but people did not put much faith in a complaint which had come on so suddenly, and which was so difficult to verify.

The King of Spain did a thing which scandalised his old nobility. Up to this time he had not begun to degrade the Order of the Golden Fleece, though he frequently did so afterwards. He now gave the Fleece to the self-styled Marquis de Bay, who was the son of an inn-keeper at Gray, in Franche-Comté. He had risen to distinction in the Army, and had rendered good service during the late campaign in Estremadura.

The Count d'Auvergne died at Paris on the 30th of November, after a long and very strange illness, which puzzled the doctors—or perhaps they understood it only too well. Before he died he consented to see his son, the Abbé d'Auvergne, now a Cardinal, with whom he had had a bitter quarrel, and whom he had turned out of his house. The Count d'Auvergne was an extremely corpulent man, and had become very infirm even before he was confined to his room. He looked rather like a wild boar, and was always in love with somebody. As a mere acquaintance he was the best man in the world; but the most difficult to get on with for any one who had to do business with him. He was very touchy, even in ordinary intercourse, easily offended, and not very forgiving; an honest man, nevertheless; though as a father he had many quarrels with his children over their mother's inheritance. He was excessively vainglorious, and touchy on the subject of his princely rank. He did not long enjoy the satisfaction of knowing that his son, the Prince of Auvergne, who had deserted and entered the Dutch service, had married a sister of the Duke of Aremberg. His other son, the Count d'Évreux, who had purchased his office of Colonel-General of Cavalry, thought that he ought to succeed him in all his other possessions; but he did not get his rooms at Versailles, which were given to Marshal Villars, nor his governorship of Limousin, given to the Duke of Berwick. He never forgave either of them, but spoke of them with the utmost bitterness, especially of the Duke of Berwick. People are always trying to make out that the King's favours are the hereditary possessions of their families.

Moreau, first *valet-de-chambre* to the Duke of Burgundy, died at Versailles. In his youth he had been one of the finest-looking men of his day, with an agreeable countenance and a very distinguished air, and he was still very handsome at the age of seventy-seven. To look at him, any one

would have taken him for a great nobleman. He had taken part in the ballets and other amusements of the King's younger days, and the King always liked him and treated him with consideration. For a long time he was much given to gallantry, and his handsome face and his reputation for discretion had procured him many successes among ladies of distinction. He had many friends, some of high position, and always knew what was going on. He was witty, sensible, and of a cheerful disposition, with the manners and air of the great world, so that he had obtained admission into a class of society far better than he was entitled to by his position; yet he was never spoilt, never forgot himself, but always remained modest, polite, and respectful. He was very honourable, upright, and disinterested, and had the entire confidence of the Duke of Burgundy and the Duke de Beauvilliers. He was not fond of devotees and Jesuits, and sometimes treated the young Prince to some very pithy and outspoken comments on his devotional practices, especially his long conferences with his confessor.

When he felt his end approaching he was so much struck by the piety which he had observed in the Duke of Burgundy that he sent to beg that he would give him his prayers and a communion after his death; declaring, at the same time, that he had never seen a character so saintly as that of the Prince. Yet he was a man who never stooped to flattery, and could not tolerate it in others. On receiving this message the Duke of Burgundy went up to Moreau's room, and as soon as he was dead offered up prayers for him. This honest eulogium, pronounced by a man of Moreau's character, produced a great effect on the Court; and perhaps no Prince of the Duke of Burgundy's age and rank ever received more sincere and hearty praise than he did on this occasion. The King left the choice of a new *valet-de-chambre* to the Duke of Burgundy; and he selected Duchesne, first *valet-de-chambre* to the Duke of Berry, a man of piety and modesty, not without tact and good sense, faithful and discreet, but still very inferior to Moreau.

The deaths of two great prelates, very unlike each other in many ways, occurred almost at the same time. One was Colbert, Archbishop of Rouen, brother to the Duchesses de Chevreuse and de Beauvilliers, who were much afflicted. He was an amiable prelate, good-looking, and very good company, who had all the manners and character of a great

nobleman, and always lived as such. With all that, he was learned, and worked hard in his diocese, where he was much loved and respected; he was singularly fortunate and judicious in his ecclesiastical appointments. He was gentle and polite in his manners, very accessible, very obliging. The Jesuits hated him, and consequently the King did not always regard him favourably; but he never took the slightest notice of them; he took care not to lay himself open to their attacks, but never suffered them to encroach in the smallest degree. The vacancies caused by his death were soon filled up. M. de la Rochefoucauld, whose family was already gorged with ecclesiastical preferments, obtained the rich abbey of Bec for his grandson, aged only nineteen; and soon had reason to be sorry for it. D'Aubigné, that factitious cousin of Madame de Maintenon, of whom I have spoken when he was made Bishop of Noyon, was translated to Rouen, with an unprecedented mark of favour. He received a patent authorising him to retain the rank and dignity of Count-Bishop of Noyon and Peer of France. This precedent, created for him, has been much abused since.

The other prelate was Cosnac, Archbishop of Aix, who died in his diocese at a great age, but retaining all his mental vigour and not changed in the least. He was a man who may almost be called illustrious, but I have said so much about him that I need add nothing in this place.

M. de Lausun lost his brother, the Chevalier de Lausun, to whom he gave an allowance sufficient to keep him alive, though they were almost always on bad terms with each other. He was a witty and well-read man, and brave; as singular and as malicious as his brother, but without his good points; sullen, shy, and debauched. He had put the finishing touch to his disfavour at Court by accompanying the Princes of Conti in their expedition to Hungary. He was a man whom one hardly ever met; even at the house of his brother, who was not inconsolable at his death.

Madame d'Armagnac died on Christmas Day, at the Great Stables at Versailles, not much to the regret of anybody. Though her figure was short, fat, and common-looking, she was one of the handsomest women in France, even up to the time of her death at the age of sixty-eight. She never used rouge, nor did she ever wear ribbons, lace, or any kind of ornament. She was always dressed in black or grey, and her tucked-up skirts made her look like a

midwife ; her hair lay flat, uncurled, and without powder ; and, wherever she was, even in the King's apartments, she always wore a black silk cape and a short, flat hood. She was the sister of Marshal de Villeroy, and had formerly lost her place as Lady of the Palace to the Queen through being mixed up in the affair which caused the banishment of the Countess de Soissons, Vardes, and de Guiche. With all his influence, her husband had never been able to restore her to the King's good graces ; he could not bear her, and never asked her to Marly so long as the company there was kept select, nor even for some time afterwards. She was a proud, arrogant woman, of little ability, though with a certain talent for scheming and manœuvring. During her whole life she never gave the " hand " to an untitled lady in her own house, nor allowed her to sit in an arm-chair. She hardly ever left her house, where she lived in great state, troubled herself very little about paying court to the King, and never called on any one except on ceremonial occasions.

With her harsh and imperious disposition, she ordered her husband about as she pleased ; he never ventured to interfere in the management of their affairs or their household expenses, nor even in matters relating to the Great Stables, except to perform his official functions ; she governed everything like a despot. She treated her sons like negro slaves ; the beauty of her daughters softened her a little so far as they were concerned, and she was not very rigorous in watching over their conduct, though her own reputation for virtue was always spotless. Every one dreaded her who had to do business with her. She completely ruined the prospects of her son, the Abbé de Lorraine, merely because he wanted to keep for himself some portion of the revenue of his benefices, which was considerable ; while she wanted to take them herself, and make him dependent on her like a child. He had been promised the nomination of the King of Portugal to the Cardinalate, and it had received the approval of our King and of the Court of Rome. His mother was not to be stopped by such a trifling consideration as this ; she took exception to his morals, which indeed were not very good, and forced the Grand Equerry to ask the King to send him to prison at St. Lazare. The King good-naturedly remonstrated ; he pointed out to the Grand Equerry that his son, having taken priest's orders, would

be irretrievably ruined by such a scandal. The Grand Equerry, however, urged on by his wife, insisted ; and the Abbé de Lorraine was sent to St. Lazare. After this there was no more question of his becoming a Cardinal. Rome would not hear of such a thing, and the King of Portugal withdrew his nomination. The Abbé remained in prison for a long time, and only obtained his release by giving in to his mother on the question of his revenues. He lived in obscurity afterwards, and did not venture to show himself for many years. He was Bishop of Bayeux when he died, having been appointed to that See during the Regency.

Madame d'Armagnac's death gave rise to a fresh encroachment on the part of the Princes of the Blood. One of the distinctions between them and Grandsons of France was that persons who were entitled to pay their respects to the King, on occasions of domestic mourning, the gentlemen wearing long mourning cloaks and the ladies in mantles, used to call, still wearing the same dress, on Grandsons and Granddaughters of France, but not on Princes or Princesses of the Blood. The latter were offended at this distinction, and by degrees got some persons of quality to call on them in cloaks and mantles ; afterwards they let it be known that they would not be pleased with any one who failed to do so ; and at last claimed it as their due. When they thought their pretension sufficiently established they began to expect the same mark of deference from Marshals of France, and by degrees brought them also into subjection. What helped them in their pretensions was the fact that the privilege of appearing in cloak or mantle had been degraded. Persons not entitled to it obtained special leave to wear cloaks, through ministerial influence or otherwise ; at last any one wore them who pleased. Then many titled persons, seeing that the privilege was no longer a distinction, used to obtain the King's leave to appear without cloak or mantle ; and when they obtained it the etiquette was that they should notify the fact to the Grandsons of France before calling on them. Very soon some people began to send word to the Princes of the Blood also that they had the King's dispensation. "It is a mere civility," they said, "which costs nothing ; we shall not wear cloak or mantle when visiting the Princes of the Blood. Why should not we give them the trifling satisfaction of notifying the King's dispensation to them ?" But the

Princes of the Blood took this notification as a recognition of their right to require people to visit them in cloaks and mantles when they had previously visited the King in that costume ; though they dared not express their displeasure openly if any one omitted to do so, as was the case with some Dukes and Duchesses.

M. le Duc thought the death of Madame d'Armagnac a favourable opportunity to get this right officially recognised ; and in the interests of his bastards, whose position he was always assimilating to that of the Princes of the Blood, the King granted his request, though with some reluctance, because the Grand Equerry was concerned in the matter. However, the King ordered the Grand Equerry to go with his sons to visit the Princes of the Blood wearing cloaks, and to make his daughters go to the Princesses in mantles. The Grand Equerry expostulated and resisted, but it was of no avail ; he had to obey ; and from that time the right of the Princes of the Blood has been fully established. Since then people nearly always obtain the King's leave to dispense with cloaks and mantles, but they have to notify the fact to the Princes of the Blood, so that it comes to exactly the same thing ; they merely get out of wearing an uncomfortable costume.

The Grand Equerry loved no one in the world but himself ; he had no sooner lost the wife who had lived with him on such good terms, and been so useful to his family, than he turned his thoughts again to matrimony. He had always admired Madame de Châteauthiers, Lady-in-Waiting to Madame. Although no longer young, she still retained some beauty, and her figure and bearing were very dignified ; in such a focus of corruption as Monsieur's Court was in the days of her youth and beauty she had always retained her virtue and probity ; she had much graceful wit, and was extremely pleasant in conversation—that is, when she chose, and when she was not in a bad temper. She was of gentle, but not very distinguished, birth. The name of her family was Fondras ; their native province was Anjou, and some of its members had been Bailiffs of the Order of Malta. She had nothing to live on, except what Madame gave her, and she did not understand the art of getting much out of her, for she was thoroughly high-minded and disinterested.

When the Grand Equerry had been one month a widower

he sent her a proposal, which she declined, thanking him for the honour he had done her, and giving as an excuse her unwillingness to displease his children. They, on their part, seeing their father's eagerness, and fearing lest he might marry some other lady who might not suit them so well, went to call on Madame de Châteauthiers and implored her to accept his proposal. But she continued to offer a wise and modest resistance, and could not be induced to give her consent. Everybody admired her and thought more highly of her for her refusal, even the Grand Equerry himself and his family. When the Duke of Orleans became Regent he provided for her amply; and after Madame's death she lived in pious retirement at Paris, leaving her house only to go to church, and died there at the age of seventy-seven or seventy-eight years.

The family pride of Madame de Soubise was the cause of the King's departing from his usual custom and interfering in a rather absurd private quarrel between persons whom he did not like, and never admitted to any sort of familiarity. The Duke de Rohan was, alternately with the Duke de la Trémouille, President of the Nobility in the Estates of Brittany; but, with the King's consent, he had resigned in favour of his son, whom he called the Prince de Léon, on account of some chimerical family pretensions. This Prince de Léon was a tall, lanky young man, extremely ugly and common-looking, who had served through one campaign in a lazy sort of way, and then left the Army on the plea of ill-health. No one, however, could be cleverer or more insinuating, or possessed more perfectly the air and manners of good society, into which he was at first received with open arms. He played high, and was very extravagant where his pleasures were concerned, though miserly in other respects. Pleasant as he was, with a peculiarly winning manner, he had a queer temper, and all his father's obstinacy; he was full of whims and caprices, and thought of nothing in the world but himself. He was madly in love with Florence, an actress who had been kept by the Duke of Orleans; he spent a great deal of money on her, had children by her, and caused a great scandal by taking her with him in his coach and six to Brittany when he went to preside over the Estates, though he did not actually take her to Dinan. His father trembled lest he should marry her, and offered to give her a pension of

5,000 livres and provide for her children if he would leave her ; but he would not hear of it.

Although Madame de Soubise disliked the Duke de Rohan, and they had always been on bad terms, it grieved her to see her own nephew, the heir to such great wealth, entangled in these sordid bonds. She, therefore, availed herself of her privilege of writing notes to the King, which I have mentioned before, and induced him to send for the Prince de Léon and his father, who had separate audiences in his private room. The son, with much cleverness and insinuating grace, contrived to touch the King on his two weak points, by showing profound respect for his person and appealing to his sympathy with all lovers. The King had a long interview with the father afterwards ; but, though he was sorry for his misfortunes, he could not help pitying the lacerated heart of the Prince de Léon. Nevertheless, the Florence had been arrested at the pretty house in the Allées du Roule, where the Prince de Léon kept her, and placed in a convent. He was furious, would not see his father and mother, or hear their names mentioned ; and it was to bring about a reconciliation and make him listen to proposals for his marriage that the King had sent for him and the Duke de Rohan.

On the 18th of December the First-President was dining with his family and some guests when the floor gave way and they fell through into a cellar. Fortunately there was a quantity of faggots in it, which prevented them falling very far ; and, with the exception of the children's tutor, they escaped without injury. The chair of the First-President's wife was so placed that she was the only one of the party who did not fall. They all got a great fright ; and it was such a shock to the nerves of the First-President that he was never the same man afterwards.

The Duke of Orleans arrived from Spain on the 30th of December. His reception by the King and in society was such as his fortunate and successful campaign deserved. As he was to return shortly, he had left all his equipages behind. He liked Spain, and people there were well pleased with him. The Duke of Berwick received orders to remain there and await his return.

The beginning of the year 1708 was marked by a lavish distribution of favours, by festivities and amusements ; unfortunately, we shall see that this cheerfulness soon came

to an end. Chamillart obtained a *brevet de retenue* of 150,000 livres on the office which he held in the Order. M. de Vendôme procured a pension of 3,000 livres for his Alberoni, whom we shall see before long attain to a prodigious height of fortune, and make a great figure in the world. The King kept Twelfth-Night in magnificent style at Versailles, with many ladies ; and the Court of St. Germain was present. After supper there was a great ball, and the King gave many during the winter both at Marly and Versailles : Monseigneur and the Duchess of Burgundy also gave some. Madame du Maine gave many entertainments, and acted in comedies before large audiences from the Court and from Paris. The Duchess of Burgundy often went to see them. M. du Maine, though conscious of the absurdity of these entertainments and the heavy expense which attended them, nevertheless used to sit in a corner by the doorway and do the honours.

Marshal de Villeroy, disgusted at the mortifications he now experienced in the Court where he had formerly held such a brilliant position, had been thinking for some time of resigning his post of Captain of the Guard ; but he hesitated, fearing the emptiness and boredom of a life without occupation. At last, on the eve of the Epiphany, he made up his mind, and, going up to the King after his return from Mass, asked his permission to resign his post in favour of his son. He had hardly opened his mouth when the King, anticipating what he was about to say, hastened to grant his request ; for he felt it a great relief that the Marshal should resign an appointment entailing such close and constant attendance on his person during the three months he was on duty. The Marshal could never have obtained such a concession at the height of his favour, even if he could have brought himself to ask it ; the Duke de Villeroy had never been entirely forgiven for his letters from Hungary, and his affair with Madame de Caylus had brought him into disfavour with Madame de Maintenon. So the Marshal obtained more in his disgrace, from the King's dislike to seeing him about his person, than he would ever have obtained from his affection. The Duke de Villeroy was out hunting that day with Monseigneur in the Bois de Boulogne, and the news of his appointment was brought to him there ; he would not believe it till it was confirmed by other messengers. I never saw people so delighted as

the Duchess and himself ; we reminded each other, with satisfaction, of that supper at which the Duchess had shed so many tears, and her husband had sighed so often, thinking his future career spoilt, in spite of his services, by his father's capricious obstinacy in forbidding him to call on Chamillart.

It was about this time that M. de Vaudemont obtained the sovereignty of Commercy, as I have already mentioned ; he was also given the small apartments at Versailles vacant by the death of the Marquis de Thianges. Thianges was of very noble birth, being of the family of Damas. He was a man of parts and literary acquirements ; very brave, full of honour and probity, but so eccentric and original that he always lived apart, and derived no advantage whatever from the fact that his mother was Madame de Montespan's sister, and herself in great favour with the King, who always treated her with distinction. She died in 1693, in magnificent rooms adjoining those of Monseigneur, where her sister's children, who liked her, though they were afraid of her, used to visit her constantly ; as did the most distinguished persons about the Court. Young as I was, she received me kindly, on account of her relationship to my mother. I remember that she sat at the far end of her room, and rose from her chair for hardly any one. Her eyes were bleary, and she wore a green shade over them ; tucked under her chin was a great linen bib, for she slobbered copiously and continually. In spite of this, she might, from her appearance and manners, have been taken for a queen ; every evening she was carried in a chair, with her bib and green shade, to the King's private apartments ; and there she sat in an arm-chair with him and his family, from the end of supper to his *coucher*.

She was said to be even wittier than Madame de Montespan, and more malicious. She led the conversation in the King's room, and used to argue with him ; these arguments often became rather angry, for he liked teasing her. She was proud and imperious to the last degree ; she was always boasting to the King about her family, which really was very ancient and noble ; and the King, to make her angry, used to run it down. Sometimes, in her anger, she would call the King names ; and the more he laughed, the more furious she became. One day, when on the subject of her family, the King told her that, with all its greatness, it could

not boast of such honours as the House of Montmorency ; it could show no Constables, Grand-Masters, and so on, among its members. "That is rather good !" she said. "The fact is, that these gentlemen from the neighbourhood of Paris thought themselves only too fortunate to be allowed to serve you Kings ; whereas we, who were Kings in our provinces, had grand officials of our own ; and they, in their turn, were served by gentlemen of the surrounding district !" She was never at a loss for a reply, never in the least embarrassed ; but she often said things which embarrassed the rest of the company. She hardly ever left Versailles, except to visit Madame de Montespan.

M. de la Rochefoucauld was an intimate friend of hers ; and so was Mademoiselle, who, like herself, was very fastidious about the cleanliness of her food. The King used to delight in putting hairs into their butter, and playing other nasty tricks of that sort on them. They would cry out and be sick, while he roared with laughter. Madame de Thianges would rise to leave the table ; scold the King in the most outspoken manner, and make as if she would throw his nastiness at his head from the other side of the table. She was invited to all the King's parties, so long as she cared about it ; and the King often pressed her to come to them even when failing health had made her habits more sedentary. She spoke to her sister's children with more than auntly authority, and they treated her with much respect and deference. She had formerly been handsome, but not so beautiful as her sisters. Her son, the Marquis de Thianges, of whom she did not think much, was *menin* to Monseigneur, a Lieutenant-General of long standing, and a very honourable man. He left no children by his marriage with a niece of Harlay, Archbishop of Paris.

The Count d'Évreux, who had not yet taken the oath as Colonel-General of cavalry, was sworn in at the beginning of this year, and drew upon himself the wrath of the *valets-de-chambre*. The fees paid on taking oaths had been constantly increasing. Originally a moderate present to the persons who receive and restore the hat and sword, they had come to be looked upon as a right, and this right had become more and more lucrative through the folly of some people and the greed of others. During the last few years many of these fees had amounted to 7,000 or 8,000 livres. It was not advisable to quarrel with the *valets-de-chambre*,

for the King liked and trusted them more than any one, except perhaps his bastards ; and they often had it in their power to do a person a good turn, and, still more, to injure him. Many a man has fallen into disgrace by their means. The Count d'Évreux paid them in silver ; they were highly affronted, and made a great fuss, saying they took nothing but gold.

We have already seen, more than once, how strongly Chamillart wished to be relieved from the burden of the finances, which was daily becoming more onerous. At last his health gave way completely ; he had a constant fever, could hardly digest anything, and had an overpowering desire to sleep at strange times ; in short, he was slowly perishing. In this sad condition, which forced him to miss many meetings of the Council, and even his hours for working with the King, he found it absolutely necessary to leave the details of the finances to another person. They could be entrusted only to one of the two Directors of Finance. Armenonville, though a man of capacity and experience, had never been able to get rid of a certain fatuity which often comes to persons of inferior birth when they rise in the world too rapidly ; and he had sometimes ventured to give himself airs of independence which Chamillart resented. The choice, therefore, fell on Desmarests. Although the new trust reposed in him brought him nothing in reality but an increase of work, as he himself admitted, further promotion for him was considered certain ; and people crowded round him as though he were already Controller-General.

Chamillart, warned by his failing health, thought at the same time of making his son's position more secure by a marriage which would bring him some solid support. The Noailles having already extended their influence by the various alliances of their daughters, now thought of putting one into Chamillart's powerful family ; they were already scheming for it, and Madame de Maintenon had been brought to believe that she highly approved of the marriage. But the family of Chamillart was strongly opposed to it. In the Court of the Duchess of Burgundy a jealousy had arisen between Chamillart's daughters and the Noailles ladies, which was carried to the point of hatred by the former. They were spoilt by their astonishing rise in the world, as well as by their parents ; they thought everything permissible to them, and put themselves under no sort of

restraint. The Duchess de Lorge was a great favourite of the Duchess of Burgundy, who often made a confidante of her. That was poaching on the preserves of the Maréchale d'Estrées ; and, to a certain extent, on those of her young sisters. Madame Chamillart feared the yoke of the Noailles, for she liked to keep up an appearance of authority in her own family, little as it was in reality, and badly as she exercised it. Her husband, too, was by no means anxious to give the Noailles a pretext for interfering in his domestic affairs. The King himself, who was often rather afraid of the Noailles, did not seem to approve of the project.

For my own part, seeing the Minister's failing health, the calamities which had taken place during his administration, the growing cabals against him, and his rash confidence in the continuance of his favour, I never ceased to impress upon his daughters the advisability of the alliance with the Noailles. It was not only extremely honourable in itself for the Chamillart family, but it seemed to be the only one which would ensure them support for the future. Madame de Maintenon, whose changes of sentiment had been fatal to persons with whom she had been united far more intimately than she had ever been with Chamillart, would be kept steady out of consideration for the Duke de Noailles. Looking to the future, the influence of his surroundings would secure Monseigneur's good-will. Mademoiselle Choin, to whom the Noailles paid servile court, always treated them with consideration ; Madame la Duchesse and d'Antin were friendly towards them ; on another side they were sure of La Vallière and the Princess of Conti (though her influence had become very inconsiderable). Lastly, the attachment between the Duchess of Burgundy and the younger Noailles, her Ladies of the Palace, ensured the good-will of that Princess for the future as well as for the present, and Chamillart could rely on the good offices of the Dukes de Chevreuse and de Beauvilliers with the Duke of Burgundy. I had no sort of intimacy with the Noailles, merely a slight acquaintance with the Maréchale, who never spoke to me on this subject ; but I thought I saw clearly that it was for Chamillart's interest that the marriage should come off, and I spared no pains to impress this view on his daughters and such members of his family as were capable of listening to advice.

The Duke de Beauvilliers was an intimate friend of Chamillart's, and had a good deal of influence over him ; but not enough to make him change his opinions when he had made up his mind that a certain course was for the good of the State. The Duke hoped that a close family connection might enable him to overcome Chamillart's obstinacy. I do not undertake to justify the sagacity of this notion ; but I can answer for the purity of the Duke's intentions, which were well known to me. He and his Duchess, who always thought alike on all subjects, undertook therefore to arrange a marriage between Chamillart's son and the daughter of the Duchess de Mortemart, who lived with her mother, had no fortune, and did not wish to take the veil. At the first mention of the project to the Duchess de Mortemart she started with anger, and her daughter felt such aversion for it that, the Marquise de Charost having laughingly asked for her patronage when she should be in a position of such high favour, she answered, " And I ask for yours, when, through some reverse of fortune, I shall have fallen back into the position of a *bourgeoise* of Paris ! " M. and Madame de Chevreuse, usually so absolutely identified with the Duke and Duchess de Beauvilliers (for to call them closely united is far too mild a term) objected to the project so warmly that they were not consulted about it again. I have heard from them, and from the Duchess de Mortemart, that, if Mademoiselle de Mortemart had taken her mother's advice, the marriage would never have come off. M. and Madame de Beauvilliers, however, managed at last to persuade their niece ; and the Chamillart family, who were disinclined to an alliance with the Noailles, felt their vanity flattered by the noble birth of Mademoiselle de Mortemart and her connection with persons in such high places.

Another reason influenced Chamillart. He realised the impossibility of retaining both his offices, for he was breaking down under the burden, and public affairs suffered with him. He could not resign the War Office, nor did he wish to do so ; but he quite realised that his successor in the Financial Department would have the chief part of the King's favour and confidence ; it was therefore important that he should be, not an enemy who would seek to ruin him, but a grateful person who would help him. He thought it would be a master-stroke of policy to entrust the Finances to a man whom the King did not like, and who would there-

fore be unable to do him an injury for a long time, even if he wished to do so.

Desmarets seemed to be the very man he wanted. Banished in disgrace after the death of his uncle Colbert, he had with great difficulty obtained leave to return to Paris after twenty years of exile ; he had then been pushed on by Chamillart till he reached the place of Director of Finances, in spite of the King's aversion ; in a word, he owed everything to Chamillart. But the bonds of gratitude alone are often too weak to secure men's services ; it was desirable to strengthen them by other influences ; and this it was which brought about the marriage of Mademoiselle de Mortemart. The Dukes de Chevreuse and de Beauvilliers would be able to scrutinise and influence the conduct of Desmarets, who was nearly related to them and to Chamillart's future daughter-in-law, and moreover closely attached to the two Dukes by ties of friendship. The choice of Desmarets, therefore, seemed a master-stroke to Chamillart ; but he did not give sufficient consideration to certain drawbacks. I did my best to point them out ; for, with my knowledge of the Court and the persons concerned, I felt sure that Chamillart and the Duke de Beauvilliers were making a mistake. Chamillart was too self-confident, too obstinate, too proud of his own sagacity, ever to listen to the advice of others ; I did not believe for a moment that the alliance between their families would give the Duke de Beauvilliers the slightest additional influence over Chamillart, or that the latter would treat his opinion with more deference than before. Nor could I believe that Madame de Maintenon, quite apart from her partiality for the Noailles, would ever regard this marriage with favour. Her hatred of the Archbishop of Cambrai was as vindictive as ever. His own ability and the powerful party at his back made him feared even by those who had overthrown him ; and, as they lived in terror of his return to favour, their hatred was constantly kept alive. Now, next to the Duchess de Béthune, the Duchess de Mortemart was the leading spirit of the little flock ; as she was frank and outspoken, and had retired from Court, she made no secret of her attachment to the Archbishop ; she often went to Cambrai, and more than once spent several months in succession there. Madame de Maintenon therefore hated her almost as much as she hated the Archbishop ; it was impossible not to see it.

I was, moreover, alarmed at her anger on seeing Chamillart, her creature and favourite, desert, so to speak, and pass over to the camp of her enemies, as she sometimes allowed herself to call the Dukes de Chevreuse and de Beauvilliers. Setting aside the offence to herself personally, it was absolutely necessary for her to have at least one Minister entirely dependent on her, on whose devotion she could count absolutely. We have seen that she was on bad terms with all the other Ministers; Chamillart was the only one on whom she could rely; if he failed her, as he would, in her opinion, if this marriage came off, she would have no one. I foresaw that the first, and speedy consequence of the marriage would be that Desmarets would have the Finances. This stroke Madame de Maintenon could not avert; but she would then do all in her power to undo her own work, and turn out Chamillart; in order to replace him by a creature of her own, whom she could trust implicitly.

For those who looked upon Madame de Maintenon as all-powerful were perfectly right; but, if they thought she had it in her power to gain her ends without artifice and considerable tact, they little knew the King. There never was a Sovereign so easily led by the nose, nor one so jealous of his independence. To govern him, it was necessary that he should not have the slightest suspicion that he was being governed; and it was for this reason that Madame de Maintenon required the assistance of a Minister entirely devoted to her; by his means she made the King, believing that he did them of his own accord, do many things which his jealousy of his independence would have made him refuse absolutely if Madame de Maintenon had proposed them directly. This curious subject would lead me too far; I may return to it again; what I have said is sufficient to explain how Madame de Maintenon could do almost anything she pleased, but how for that purpose it was necessary for her to have a Minister entirely at her disposal. She always found one; for it was the way to surpass all the other Ministers in favour and influence; and the fate of the powerful Louvois, whom she struck to the ground, was a formidable warning of what she could do. As for the Duke de Beauvilliers, her vindictive designs against him were not yet laid aside; we shall see later on what it was that saved him.

Neither M. de Beauvilliers nor Chamillart paid sufficient

attention to these considerations ; they thought my fears exaggerated, and went on with their project. As soon as they had settled it between themselves, Chamillart spoke to Madame de Maintenon. Her back was up at once, and she set the King against the marriage ; as Chamillart discovered when he broached the subject to him. Unfortunately, his success in the case of La Feuillade had shown him the possibility of arranging his children's marriages in spite of the royal opposition ; he returned to the charge, and obtained a vexed and reluctant consent from the King and Madame de Maintenon. The King departed so far from his usual reserve as to say that Chamillart was apparently determined to choose a Quietist ; but, after all, it was no concern of his. So the marriage took place, to the unconcealed annoyance of the whole family of Mortemart. The wedding was celebrated at L'Étang with much rejoicing and pomp, though without undue ostentation ; and for six weeks the newly married Marquise de Cani enjoyed all the splendour of her father-in-law's position. But his health was growing worse from day to day ; his credit was failing, for the bad state of affairs made it impossible for him to carry out all his engagements ; and he saw it was high time to make sure of the object which had chiefly inclined him to the marriage.

He had begun to perceive that the King was sufficiently aware of the bad state of public affairs to allow him to resign, and he knew Madame de Maintenon too well not to notice the change in her manner towards him since he had spoken to her on the subject of his son's marriage. In fact, he saw, though too late, that matters had come to such a pass that, if he deferred his resignation too long his office of Controller-General would be taken from him. This discovery was so mortifying that he was tempted to throw up his position as Minister altogether, and was only dissuaded by the lamentations of his wife and the influence of his daughter-in-law's family. I heard this in confidence from the Duchess de Mortemart ; as may be supposed, it did not make her any better pleased with the marriage to which she had consented so reluctantly.

The King was at Marly at the time. He was annoyed with Madame de Saint-Simon and myself because we had given up dancing ; we had continued to dance up to that time by his express orders, but I thought his authority was

not sufficient to preserve me from ridicule if I went on with it at the age of thirty-four, which I had then attained. There was to be dancing at Marly, and consequently we were not invited ; I spent the time at L'Étang, where Chamillart, unable to attend to business, and almost confined to his bed, was taking a holiday with his family. As soon as I had an opportunity of being alone with him he confided his design to me, but without naming his successor. The marriage was an accomplished fact ; the ill-will which it had caused had been already incurred ; the only thing to be done now was to extract from it as much profit as possible.

I was a friend of Desmarets ; I knew the wishes of the Dukes de Chevreuse and de Beauvilliers ; I perceived clearly that it was for Chamillart's interest that he should be appointed. I had little doubt that Desmarets would be his choice, but I was afraid of the weakness which so often causes dying persons to alter their wills. I did not mention the name of Desmarets, so as not to annoy Chamillart by letting him see that I had divined his intentions ; but I represented to him how important it was that his successor should be a man nominated by himself and bound to him by the ties of gratitude. I urged him not to be influenced by scruples of false delicacy in a matter of such vital importance to himself, but to name his successor without hesitation ; and, if necessary, strain his credit to secure his appointment. I laid great stress on this last point, for I was afraid of Madame de Maintenon's wiles and the King's weakness ; and more than all I distrusted Chamillart's excessive self-confidence.

I went the same evening to Paris, where I saw Desmarets, and we conversed unreservedly. He was like a man who sees the heavens opened to him, and reckoned on the change of his fortunes for the very next day. Next morning I met the Duke of Orleans by appointment at the Palais-Royal, as he was on the point of leaving for Spain. We had a long conversation about his own affairs, after which I mentioned the subject of the Finances. He had heard all about it from Madame de Maintenon, with whom he was on good terms at that time. He told me she had assured him that she was so anxious about the condition of public affairs that her only wish was to obtain the services of the ablest man available ; whereupon, out of curiosity, he mentioned the name of Desmarets, and, though she received it coldly,

she said nothing against him, only, she said, the King felt a great repugnance for him, but for which his appointment would have been already made public. I tried to find out whether there were any other aspirants ; but there seemed to be none except Voysin, who was suggested by Madame de Maintenon ; but not urgently, because she felt that on this occasion she would have to give way to Chamillart, and she fully expected him to do his best for Desmarets. Next day I heard from the Chancellor that Desmarets was appointed Controller-General.

The following day, which was Shrove Tuesday, I went to see Desmarets, and found him in his private room, receiving congratulations, and already immersed in business. As soon as he saw me he left everything, and, taking me aside to a window, spent more than half an hour in relating all that had passed. He told me that Chamillart had given in his resignation on Sunday, and had discussed the question of his successor with the King at some length ; that, having vainly tried to induce the King to name some one himself, he had at last proposed Desmarets ; that the King had accepted the suggestion without raising any objections, and had told Chamillart to bring him to Marly next morning. When he went there the King told him at once that he fully realised the deplorable condition of his finances, adding that, if Desmarets could find a remedy, he should be very grateful, but not in the least disappointed if things continued to go from bad to worse ; seasoning his discourse with all the compliments which he was in the habit of paying to newly appointed Ministers. Desmarets said he was equally surprised and relieved at hearing the King explain his financial position so clearly ; surprised, because he had not imagined that he knew nearly so much about it ; and relieved, because he was spared the necessity of explanations which would have been painful for his predecessor in office.

He then proceeded to give me a brief outline of the measures which he proposed to take ; and they seemed to me very judicious. As he seemed to disapprove of some things which Chamillart had done, I took the liberty of reminding him of his great obligations to him, going so far as to use the word "ingratitude." Desmarets took my remark well, and said it would be his fault if he made a mistake in future as to his real friends, since twenty years of disgrace ought to have taught him to recognise them. I then told

him that in his position he ought to make himself acquainted with the names of persons who had made private pickings out of the public finances ; I could assure him that among them he would not find those of Madame de Saint-Simon and myself, for we had always abhorred that way of making money, and had refused to dirty our hands with it. All I asked from him, I said, was that he would see to the punctual payment of my salaries, and would bear in mind our old friendship when my affairs were unavoidably brought before his department. For in those days, when new taxes and imposts were being continually invented, there was no property which did not frequently come under the eyes of these financial gentlemen ; and landowners had to be grateful to them for the small remnant left of estates which their families had possessed for centuries.

His answer was all that I could desire. He said he knew how far removed Madame de Saint-Simon and I were from such methods of gain, and then went on to speak of the scandalous greed of some persons in the highest positions ; of the treasures amassed by M. de Marsan and M. de Mattignon, acting in concert ; and of the ceaseless speculations of the Maréchale de Noailles and her daughter, the Duchess de Guiche, by which much discredit had been thrown upon Chamillart. I stopped him here, and told him that, with regard to these two ladies, Chamillart had informed Madame de Saint-Simon that he had the King's express instructions to give them an opportunity of making some profit for themselves out of any financial transaction which might arise from time to time ; at which Desmarets was considerably astonished. He was still more so when he heard that Chamillart declined to interfere with other people who obtained pickings of the same sort through d'Armenonville. This led him on to speak of d'Armenonville ; and, though he knew that I was his friend, he could not in this moment of triumph conceal his hatred for him. No doubt this hatred arose from the cruel speech which Pelletier, d'Armenonville's brother-in-law, had addressed to Desmarets on the occasion of his dismissal. I left Desmarets with many reflections on the mutability of this world's affairs, and grave doubts as to the durability of the union between Chamillart and himself.

It is incredible what an outcry there was against the Duke de Beauvilliers on this occasion. People said that with

all his piety, modesty, and retirement from the world, he had sacrificed his niece, of an illustrious family, to his ambition of dominating the Council by means of Chamillart (whose son thus became his nephew), and of his first-cousins, Desmarests and Torcy. The purity of his motives was beyond the comprehension of an ambitious Court ; Madame de Maintenon, angry because she had been unable to ruin him, set the fashion of abusing him ; Harcourt and his cabal, who coveted his offices, displayed an eloquence very pleasing to their patroness ; the Noailles, furious at their disappointment, put no restraint on their tongues, and they were a clan with many adherents ; M. de la Rochefoucauld, who liked neither them nor Madame de Maintenon, but who was so naturally envious that he could make even a village curacy a subject of jealousy, barked as loudly as any of them. It was useless to talk to this crowd of motives which were beyond their comprehension ; there was nothing for it but to keep silence and let the storm go by ; it passed off almost as quickly as it had arisen, and the dignified tranquillity of the Duke de Beauvilliers was not disturbed by it for a moment.

Langlée died about this time ; I have already said enough about this singular personage. Society lost in him a giver of entertainments and an arbiter of fashion, and ladies were relieved from hearing a good many indecent speeches. He left his fine house, with an income of more than 40,000 livres, to Mademoiselle de Guiscard, his sister's only daughter.

Montbron died very soon afterwards, whom servility to Louvois and attention to petty details had brought into familiarity with the King. He was a puny-looking little man, of moderate intelligence, but bent on making his way ; a great boaster and a merciless talker, yet not an ill-bred man ; he was brave, and not a bad officer ; the King would have liked to make him a Marshal of France if he had not been afraid of arousing comparisons between him and Montal, the Duke de Choiseul, and others whom he had refused to promote. Montbron bore the name and the full arms of the great and ancient house of Montbéron, which had fallen into decay for many years ; and they raised no objection, because in France everybody does as he pleases in matters of that sort. But he was directly descended from a Chevalier de Montbéron, who was a general of finance in 1539, and bore the arms of Montbéron debased by a fillet.

This is a mark of bastardy, and, coupled with his employment, is quite enough to show how he came by his name. Montbéron was made a Knight of the Order, by M. de Louvois' influence, in the promotion of 1688, when it was conferred on so many military men and persons of low birth. He always wore his own hair, with great breeches, which did not go well with the blue ribbon. He used to come and see the King every year, and was always received with distinction. He took it into his head to become a doctor and a chemist, and composed a fashionable remedy which killed most of those who tried it by giving them cancer. He himself died of cancer in his hand.

CHAPTER III

1708

The Duke of Orleans prepares to return to Spain—His staff—The King prefers an atheist to a Jansenist—I discover that the Duke de Chevreuse is a Minister of State—An important design—Projected invasion of Scotland—A revolt fomented in the Spanish Netherlands—Bergheyck exposes Vendôme's ignorance—An unlucky delay—The King of England ill with measles—The Scotch expedition fails—Return of the King of England—He assumes the title of Chevalier de St. Georges—His reception at Marly—A cheap Marshal's bâton—An insignificant marriage leads to important results—Disinterested conduct of the Chancellor—Retirement of Brissac—Anecdotes concerning him—Devout ladies exposed—Rouvroy claims relationship with me—His history—I decline the honour—Illness of the Duchess of Burgundy—The King's cold-blooded selfishness—I discover that the Duke of Burgundy is destined for the command in Flanders.

THE Duke of Orleans, knowing how seriously the results of the previous campaign, and his own reputation, had been imperilled by the extreme exhaustion of Spain, refused to start for that country without a good supply of money. Tésut, one of his chief secretaries, died suddenly. He was the son of a counsellor in the Parliament of Burgundy who was a friend of my father's, and used to look after his stock of wine. He was a person of considerable ability and acquirements, very eccentric, and of a very morose humour, who nevertheless went a good deal into society, and was received with a consideration beyond what his condition entitled him to. He had served Monsieur in the same capacity, and, though on good terms with the persons who governed him, was nevertheless a very honourable man. The Abbé Dubois, whom we shall see a Cardinal and master of the kingdom, was very desirous of obtaining Tésut's office ; and the Duke of Orleans, who had the fatal weakness for him which Princes so often seem to have for their tutors, was very anxious to give it to him. The Duchess of Orleans, though the Abbé had brought about her marriage, was in a great fright lest he should be appointed, for she knew him

well ; and the King, who knew him even better, interposed so decisively that his nephew had to seek another secretary. He gave the appointment to the Abbé Tésut, brother to the one who died ; as honourable a man as he was, but quite as morose and splenetic. The Abbé Dubois could not get over his exclusion ; being unable to vent his anger on the King or the Duchess of Orleans, he turned it against his successful rival, whom he never forgave, even when blind fortune had exalted him to the highest pinnacles. The time has not yet arrived to speak at any length about this extraordinary rascal.

The King insisted on hearing the names of the persons who were to accompany the Duke of Orleans to Spain, and would not allow Nancreé to be one of the number. His stepmother's journey with Madame d'Argenton set the King against him ; he obtained an audience on his return from Dauphiné, to put himself right, as I have already mentioned ; and thought he had succeeded ; so this touch of the curb was an unpleasant surprise for him. He bowed to the inevitable ; but, like a cunning, scheming fellow, full of artfulness, and quite careless as to the methods he employed, he hoped to raise his head again before long.

Among the members of his staff the Duke of Orleans nominated Fontpertuis. On hearing this name the King assumed an air of severity. "What, nephew !" said he, "Fontpertuis ! the son of that Jansenist, that silly woman who used to run about everywhere after M. Arnaud ! I cannot allow that man to go with you." "Faith, Sir," said the Duke of Orleans, "I do not know what the mother may have done ; but, as for the son, I can guarantee that he is no Jansenist. Why, he does not so much as believe that there is a God !" "Are you sure of that, nephew ?" said the King, more mildly. "Nothing is more certain, Sir," said the Duke ; "I can assure you most positively that it is so." "Oh, well, in that case," said the King, "it does not matter ; you can take him." This conversation took place in the morning, and that afternoon the Duke of Orleans, in fits of laughter, repeated it to me word for word as I have written it. We had a good laugh over it ; and then reflected with astonishment on the profound learning of a devout and religious King who had no hesitation in preferring Atheism to what he had been taught to look upon as Jansenism ; thinking a Jansenist a dangerous person to accompany a

young Prince on a campaign, whereas the impiety of the atheist was no drawback whatever in his eyes. The Duke of Orleans could not refrain from telling the story, and he never told it without laughing till he cried. It went the rounds of the Court and the society of Paris ; and, strange to say, the King was not at all angry. It bore witness to his attachment to sound doctrine, and helped to keep people away from Jansenism, for fear of incurring his displeasure. Most people were highly amused by the story ; but there were a few wiser persons who felt more inclined to weep than to laugh when they reflected on the excess of blindness to which the King had been brought.

A project of the highest importance had been conceived for some time, and its originators had been trying to get it taken up by some person in authority. I guessed who they were ; and during the visit of the Court to Fontainebleau, where it was finally decided upon, they told me all about it under the strictest promises of secrecy. Incidentally I discovered another secret which was known to very few persons, namely, that the Duke de Chevreuse, though he did not attend the meetings of the Council, was in reality a Minister of State. His frequent consultations with Pontchartrain at Fontainebleau aroused my suspicions, and the avowal they both made to me with regard to the project already mentioned confirmed me in the belief that the Duke de Chevreuse was a Minister. I ventured to say so to the Duke de Beauvilliers, who was much put out, and asked me how I knew it ; finally, he acknowledged that I was right, begging me to keep the matter to myself. I could not refrain from speaking about it to the Duke de Chevreuse the same afternoon. He reddened up to the eyes, hesitated, stammered, and ended by imploring me not to let any one else into the secret, which he could no longer keep from me. I heard from them that for the last three years the Ministers for Foreign Affairs, War, Marine, and Finance had been under orders to conceal nothing from the Duke de Chevreuse ; the first two were directed to communicate all designs and despatches to him, and all four to confer with him about everything. The King gave him long audiences in his private room, often keeping him back when all other persons went out. Almost every evening about the middle of supper he used to come and stand at the corner of the King's arm-chair. At that time it was the custom to make way for

a *seigneur* ; the King, hearing the movement, almost always looked round to see who had come in, and when it was M. de Chevreuse he invariably began a conversation with him in a low tone. For a long time I was taken in, like the rest of the Court ; we wondered how some insignificant details concerning the Light Horse could furnish matter for such long, confidential talks, and still more when, the Duke having resigned his command of that company in favour of his son, that pretext had been removed. At last I suspected that there was something more ; and during the visit to Fontainebleau I discovered the whole mystery. These conversations were about public affairs, and they were what kept the Duke of Chevreuse so continually busy in his own rooms ; nobody could understand why the management of his own affairs or those of the Light Horse should make it necessary for him to shut himself up as much as he did. The King had always liked him ; he was perhaps the only clever and learned man of whom he was not afraid. He was reassured by the Duke's modesty and prudence, and because, like the Duke de Beauvilliers, he had the great merit of always trembling in the King's presence. No one could speak more accurately or logically, or express himself more clearly on any subject. The King would have liked to admit him to the Council, but Madame de Maintenon, Harcourt, and M. de la Rouchefoucauld dissuaded him ; he therefore hit upon this plan of making him a Minister *incognito*, which I believe never to have been adopted in any other case, and which perhaps no one but the Duke de Chevreuse would have agreed to.

It was through the influence of the Duke de Chevreuse that the King's consent was obtained to the project of which I have spoken. Hooke, formerly an English clergyman, who had become a Catholic, and devoted all his energies to the restoration of the Stuarts, thought the Union between England and Scotland afforded a favourable opportunity for an enterprise in the latter country. The Jacobite party was strong in Scotland, where the people were in despair at seeing their ancient kingdom reduced to the level of a province of England. Hooke made several secret journeys to England, and finally laid his plans before our Ministers. They agreed that an attempt on Scotland would effect a powerful diversion, deprive the allies of the assistance of the English troops, and make it impossible for them to help

the Archduke in Spain. But the King had been so much discouraged by the failure of former enterprises of the sort that no one dared to propose it. The Duke de Chevreuse at last undertook to do so, but it required the united influence of Madame de Maintenon and of all the Ministers to induce the King to consent, and then he only did so with the greatest reluctance.

Simultaneously with the invasion of Scotland, which, it was hoped, would paralyse the English, it was decided to stir up a revolt in the Spanish Netherlands. Bergheyck was summoned to Paris as the man best fitted by his knowledge of that country, as well as by his general capacity, to carry this scheme into effect. He was admitted to the secret of the Scotch expedition, and, after mature consideration, came to the conclusion that, during the first surprise and confusion of the Allies, it might be possible to make ourselves masters of the principal fortified towns in the Spanish Netherlands. The difficulty was that in each place the Spanish party was in a minority; nevertheless, Bergheyck thought such influences might be brought to bear on the leading burghers as would almost ensure success. It was thought advisable, before he went away, to make plans for the movements of our forces in Flanders in the various contingencies which might arise in case this project was carried out successfully; and for this purpose it was necessary to consult Vendôme, the General in chief command. He was therefore admitted into the secret; and the subject was talked over between him and Bergheyck, in the King's presence, Chamillart being also in attendance. Among other matters, certain movements in the neighbourhood of Maestricht were discussed. Vendôme explained how he proposed to carry them out; Bergheyck raised some objection. Vendôme, indignant that a man of the pen should venture to differ from him on a point of strategy, grew warm; the other, quietly and with all respect, maintained his opinion. At last they realised that the point in dispute turned on the course of the river Meuse. Vendôme scoffed at Bergheyck as an ignorant man who did not know the geography of the country: Bergheyck replied modestly that he did not pretend to give an opinion on military matters; only he maintained that if Vendôme carried out his plan he would have the Meuse between him and Maestricht. Vendôme declared, in a most contemptuous manner, that Bergheyck

was entirely wrong as to the course of the Meuse ; at last the King, tired of this heated discussion about a plain matter of fact, sent for a map, which proved that Bergheyck was entirely in the right. This exhibition would have shaken the confidence of any one but the King in his favourite General ; any one but Vendôme would have been overwhelmed with confusion ; but it was Bergheyck who was the most embarrassed of the three, and ever afterwards he trembled to see our armies entrusted to such a leader, and the King's blind confidence in him. He was immediately sent back to Flanders to make arrangements for the projected revolt, and he did so with so much ability that complete success might have been expected ; but the success of this scheme depended on that of the Scotch expedition, and, as the latter came to nothing, the eventual outcome of Bergheyck's operations remains a matter of mere conjecture.

A number of Scotch envoys, accredited by the chief noblemen of the country, had been concealed at Montrouge, near Paris. They urged that the expedition should be undertaken without delay, and the King gave the necessary orders. Thirty ships were fitted out at Dunkirk and the neighbouring ports, under the command of the Chevalier de Forbin ; 6,000 men were brought to the coast, and 4,000,000 livres sent to defray their expenses. The secret was well kept ; unfortunately, there were great delays, which caused mutual recriminations between Pontchartrain and Chamillart. As a matter of fact, both were to blame ; but Pontchartrain was more than suspected of acting as he did through ill-will, while Chamillart's shortcomings were caused by want of means. Great care was taken that no unusual signs of activity should be visible at St. Germain. The King of England was to be accompanied only by the Duke of Perth, Middleton, the two Hamiltons, and a very few others. Gacé (Mattignon's brother) and Vibraye were to command the land-forces ; the first a worthy, honourable man, but without ability or military reputation ; Vibraye a brave though debauched officer, and nothing more. Chamillart, an intimate friend of the Mattignons, seized this opportunity to make Gacé a Marshal of France ; the King was complaisant enough to allow him to give the King of England a sealed packet containing Gacé's *bâton* and patent, which was to be handed to him directly they landed in Scotland.

At last, on the 6th of March, the King of England left St. Germain. It could hardly be doubted that, after so many delays, the English had received some warning ; and in fact a squadron under Sir J. Leake appeared unexpectedly before Dunkirk and blockaded the port. The King of England insisted on forcing a passage, and the troops were already embarked, when an unfortunate hindrance arose. The Princess-Royal of England had been laid up with measles ; the King, her brother, had been kept away from her most carefully, but, in spite of all precautions, he caught the disease, which declared itself at Dunkirk, just as the troops had completed their embarkation. The young King was in despair, and wanted to be wrapped in a blanket and carried on board. The doctors, however, declared that it would kill him, and the departure had to be postponed. In the meantime two of the Scotch envoys had started for Scotland to announce the immediate coming of their King with troops and a supply of arms ; and the knowledge of the excitement which would inevitably be caused by their arrival made the delay still more painful. On the 19th of March the King of England, though hardly convalescent, and still very weak, insisted on embarking, in spite of the remonstrances of his physicians and attendants ; and the expedition sailed at six in the morning, a fog concealing the vessel from the enemy's cruisers.

There was at St. Germain an old Lord Griffin, a dull man, and a strong Protestant, but very loyal, who from his love of hunting and his natural worth, had endeared himself to the Count de Toulouse, the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, and other courtiers who followed the hounds. He had heard nothing of the expedition till he was enlightened by the departure of the King of England. He went straight to the Queen, and with his English freedom reproached her for her want of confidence in him, in spite of his fidelity and long service ; and assured her that neither his age nor religion should prevent him from accompanying his King and serving him to the last hour of his life. Thereupon he went to Versailles, asked the Count de Toulouse to lend him a horse and 100 louis, and galloped off to Dunkirk, where he arrived in time to embark with the others.

On the evening of the day of departure a furious storm arose and compelled the expedition to take shelter behind the sandbanks at Ostend. Rambure, who commanded a

frigate, was separated from the rest, and made for the coast of Picardy ; as soon as the weather moderated he sailed for Edinburgh, where he expected to find the squadron. On arriving in the river he was met by a number of small boats, the people in which told him that the King was expected with the utmost impatience, but had not yet arrived. Uneasy at this news, Rambure turned back to the mouth of the Firth, where he saw Forbin's squadron hotly pursued by twenty-six large English ships of war. He did his best to join them ; but, being in great danger of capture, was forced to return to Dunkirk, whence he was immediately sent to carry these disquieting tidings to the Court. Five or six days later the King of England himself arrived at Dunkirk, with a few damaged vessels.

That Prince, as soon as the storm moderated, had resumed his voyage ; but, owing to some unskilful navigation, two days were lost between Ostend and Edinburgh. This blunder gave the English fleet time to catch up the expedition, and made it impossible to enter the Firth of Forth. A council of war was held on board the King's ship, and it was proposed to make for Inverness, fifteen ¹ or twenty leagues farther north. But Middleton protested strongly against it, declaring that the King was expected at Edinburgh only, and would find nothing prepared to receive him elsewhere ; so, in spite of the Duke of Perth and the two Hamiltons, it was decided to return to France. This rendered an action inevitable, in which the English captured two ships of war and some other vessels. The Marquis de Lévi, Lord Griffin, and Middleton's two sons were taken prisoner, and after some ill-treatment were sent to London. Griffin was promptly condemned to death, but behaved with so much firmness that the Government was ashamed to carry out the sentence. The Queen sent him a respite, which was renewed from time to time ; till at last he was given to understand that he might live as he pleased in London on parole. He died there a few years later of old age. Middleton's sons were not prosecuted, but were well received everywhere. M. de Lévi was sent to Nottingham, to keep Marshal Tallard company ; and the rest of the officers were allowed to return to France on parole.

As soon as it was decided to return to Dunkirk the King

¹ As a matter of fact, it is about two hundred miles from the Firth of Forth to Inverness by sea.

of England opened the sealed packet which Chamillart had given him ; he knew what it contained, and so, apparently, did Gacé. The King handed him his patent and declared him a Marshal of France ; it would be difficult to become one on easier terms. Gacé took the name of Marshal de Mattignon, in remembrance of his great-grandfather, who conferred so much lustre on his house. Lévi was at the same time declared a Lieutenant-General ; it was with that object that his father-in-law had made him join the expedition.

This was the first occasion on which the King of England assumed the title of Chevalier de St. Georges, and the first on which his enemies gave him the name of the Pretender, by both of which he has been known ever since. He showed plenty of courage and determination, but they were rendered fruitless by the effects of his bad education, which had been narrow and austere. The Queen his mother had brought him up in this manner, partly from a mistaken view of religion, partly to keep him in subjection and dependence on herself, for, with all her piety, she was fond of domineering. He wrote from Dunkirk asking to be allowed to remain in some neighbouring town till the opening of the campaign, in which he hoped to take part. The last portion of his petition was granted, but he was told to return to St. Germain, where he arrived on the 20th of April.

Two days afterwards he came with the Queen to Marly, where the King was staying. I was curious to see the interview. The weather was very fine. The King, followed by all the courtiers, went out to meet the King of England. As he was about to descend the steps of the terrace we saw the Court of St. Germain advancing slowly up the walk. Middleton came forward alone, with a very singular air, and embraced the King's thigh. The King received him graciously, and spoke to him three or four times, fixing his eyes on him each time in a manner which would have embarrassed any one else ; he then proceeded down the walk. As the two Kings approached each other they separated from their respective Courts, and advanced with equal steps ; they then embraced each other cordially, still with the same perfect equality. Grief was depicted on the countenances of all these poor people. The Duke of Perth afterwards made his bow to the King, who received him politely, but merely as a great nobleman. We then walked

towards the *château*, the only conversation being a few trifling remarks which died away on our lips. The Queen, with the two Kings, went into Madame de Maintenon's room ; the Princess-Royal remained in the saloon with the Duchess of Burgundy and the whole Court. The Prince of Conti, with his natural inquisitiveness, got hold of Middleton ; the Duke of Perth went aside with the Duke de Beauvilliers and Torcy. The few other English were welcomed with more cordiality than usual, in hopes that they might be induced to talk ; but nothing could be got out of their reserve except an affectation of ignorance, which was very significant, and vague complaints of bad luck and unfortunate *contretemps*. The two Kings were alone together for a long time, while Madame de Maintenon entertained the Queen. After about an hour they came out ; a dull and melancholy walk followed, and the visit terminated.

Middleton was strongly suspected of having betrayed the secret of the expedition to the English. They gave no sign of being aware of anything, but quietly took all precautions, concealed their naval forces by pretending to send a great part of them to escort a convoy to Portugal, and moved the few troops they had in England towards the Scotch border. The Queen, under the pretext of confidence and friendship, managed to detain in London the Duke of Hamilton, the greatest nobleman in Scotland, who was the chief and moving spirit of the enterprise. She did not announce the affair to her Parliament till it had become public ; when it was over she refused to investigate the conspiracy, and wisely avoided driving the Scotch to desperation. By this conduct she gained their gratitude, augmented her authority, and prevented any similar attempts in the future by removing all prospect of success. Thus ended a project which was well conceived and well carried out till the moment came for action, when it failed wretchedly ; and with it ended the scheme for the revolt of the Spanish Netherlands, which had no longer any prospect of success. I must now go back a little.

About this time Béthune, nephew of the Queen of Poland, who had scarcely anything of his own, married a sister of the Duke d'Harcourt, more for the honour of the alliance than for the sake of her fortune, which did not exceed 80,000 livres. It is a pity that the period which I propose for the limit of these Memoirs does not come down so far as the

death of the last Sovereign of the House of Austria. If it did, it would be seen that in this marriage,¹ apparently so insignificant, lay the germ of events which Providence destined to shake every Power in Europe, to annihilate the famous Pragmatic Sanction, which they had all guaranteed, and to place the Imperial diadem and the Crown of Bohemia on the head of a Bavarian Prince, at the expense of the heiress, who, having the Emperor for her husband, and so many powerful allies bound to her by their own interests, thought herself in secure possession. He who reads history with an eye to perceive the original sources of the events which it records, and their gradual development, will find that no study (except that of the Sacred Writings, and of the great Book of Nature, which is always open to us) has such a tendency to raise the soul to God and keep it in perpetual admiration of His works, or to show more clearly the vanity and blindness of human aspirations and designs.

Thévenin, a rich contractor, died childless about this time. He owed his fortune to the Chancellor, at the time when he was Controller-General of Finance. He had a very fine house, magnificently furnished, which he bequeathed to the Chancellor; but the latter declined to accept the legacy, although the King advised him to do so. This disinterested action was highly commended; the more so because, as he made no allusion to the subject for six weeks after the King had spoken to him, everybody thought he would accept. At the expiration of that time he submitted his reasons to the King, and finally refused the legacy.

Brissac, Major of the Body-Guards, left the Court and retired to his country house, where he soon afterwards died of *ennui* at the age of eighty years. By birth he was a gentleman, but nothing more; he was not, and did not

¹ A daughter of this marriage became the wife of Marshal de Belle-Isle, who played such a leading part in the affairs of the Imperial succession in 1741 and 1742, after the death of the Emperor Charles VI. The Elector of Bavaria, proclaimed Emperor, as Charles VII, on the 4th of January, 1742, was grandson, through his mother, of John Sobieski, King of Poland, and consequently second-cousin to the Maréchale de Belle-Isle. Saint-Simon means that, but for this relationship, Marshal de Belle-Isle would not have exerted himself so strongly in favour of the Elector during his long diplomatic tour to the Courts of Germany, and the election would have resulted differently. Carlyle, in his "History of Frederick the Great," gives a detailed account of the Marshal's mission, and of the intrigues which led to the choice of the Elector of Bavaria. See also the Duke de Broglie's "Frederic II et Marie-Thérèse."

pretend to be, of the House of Cossé. In appearance and manners he was a sort of wild boar, before whom the four companies of the Body-Guard trembled ; and even their Captains, great noblemen and general officers as they were, had to treat him with consideration. The King had employed him to put his Guards on a soldier-like footing, and to establish regulations for their interior economy and discipline ; and he had earned his confidence by his strictness, his uprightness, and his singular aptitude for service of this kind. He had all the exterior of an ill-natured man, but in reality he was nothing of the sort ; he was always ready to do a service without letting it be known, and often saved people from disagreeable affairs ; but, even when he did so, his manner was harsh and unpleasant. The King happening to say, one day, that a good major must always be disliked by his troops, " If a man must be thoroughly hated, Sir, to be a good major," said M. de Duras, who was on duty behind his chair, " here is the very best in France ! " And he took Brissac by the arm and pulled him forward, to his great confusion. The King burst out laughing ; he would have been much displeased with any one else, but M. de Duras was on a footing to say what he liked. Brissac had a very robust constitution, and was always scoffing at doctors, especially at Fagon, whom no one else dared attack ; sometimes even in the King's presence. Fagon was very angry, and affected to treat him with contempt, but with all his wit he found it difficult to answer him. These little scenes were often very funny.

A few years before his retirement Brissac played a queer trick on some of the ladies. He was a very honest man, and could not bear any sort of pretence. It annoyed him to see that on Thursdays and Sundays, when the King usually attended the evening service in the chapel, the seats were always thronged with ladies, each with a candle in front of her, ostensibly to enable her to read her Book of Hours, but in reality that she might be seen and recognised ; whereas, if it was known beforehand that the King would not attend, there were hardly any ladies present. One evening, before the service began, all the guards being posted and the ladies in their places, Brissac appeared in the King's seat, raised his staff, and called out : " Guards, you may retire to the guard-room ; the King is not coming ! " The order was obeyed ; there were whisperings among the ladies, the

candles were extinguished one by one, and in a few minutes the chapel was deserted, only the Duchess de Guiche, Madame de Dangeau, and one or two other ladies, remaining. Brissac had posted corporals outside to stop the guards, and as soon as the ladies were out of sight they all returned to their places. Thereupon the King arrived, and was very much astonished to see no ladies present. After the service Brissac told him what he had done, not without some sarcastic comments on the piety of court ladies. The King laughed heartily, and the story soon went the rounds. The ladies would have liked to strangle Brissac.

A general promotion took place in the Navy about this time, and Rouvroy was passed over, to his great dissatisfaction. He was a captain, a good officer and brave, who would have been made an Admiral long before if his quarrelsome temper, his absurd pride, and his propensity for plundering whenever he had the chance had not caused him to be honourably superseded. I say "honourably," but all the same, in spite of his outcries, he never received any sort of compensation. His father or grandfather, of obscure birth, apparently had a high opinion of the name and arms of Rouvroy, since he adopted them without belonging to the family. The Rouvroy of whom I am now speaking had two sisters, both of them Maids of Honour to Madame; they had given themselves out to Madame and Monsieur as being of our House. Their brother was about to make a marriage which they did not like; as they saw no other way of stopping it, they came to my father, trusting that he would not disavow the relationship to their faces, and told him that they had recourse to him, feeling sure that he would not like a man who had the honour of belonging to his family to disgrace himself by such a marriage.

My father had not the slightest acquaintance with any of them; he was hot-tempered, and fired up. He told them that he acknowledged neither their brother nor themselves as belonging to his family; he had never heard of this relationship, which he defied them to prove, and consequently he would have nothing to do with their affairs. He added that he had raised no objection to their assuming the name of Rouvroy and bearing his arms, and that was quite enough, without their coming to him with these impudent claims of relationship. A flood of tears was their only reply; and they departed in confusion, enraged at the

insult which they had brought upon themselves. This scene took place in my mother's room ; she said not a single word. I was present, and it made so great an impression upon me that I remember it perfectly, as if it had happened only yesterday. The two ladies went off to complain to Monsieur ; and made a great fuss about their adventure, which my father treated with contempt. Monsieur sent to beg him to call at the Palais-Royal, which he did ; and explained to Monsieur and Madame how the matter really stood. They were perfectly satisfied, and told the two women that they had better hold their tongues till they could produce some proof of their relationship. That ended the affair, and the brother's marriage took place.

This would be the proper place for explaining my family name and arms, and how taking the name of Rouvroy, though I do not bear it myself, was in reality claiming relationship ; but it would make too long a parenthesis. For many years I heard no more of these people. The person whom Rouvroy had married was the daughter of the sub-governess to Monsieur's daughters by Madame, his first wife. She turned out to be a woman of sense and real merit ; she was very intimate with the Princess of Conti, spending much of her time at her house on a footing of confidence and friendship. She was also much esteemed by Mademoiselle de Lislebonne, Madame d'Espinoy, Madame d'Urfé, and other ladies. Monseigneur, who at this time was inseparable from the Princess of Conti, was also kind to Madame de Rouvroy ; and she was invited to all their entertainments. After a time she and her husband grew tired of living at Versailles and Fontainebleau without really belonging to the Court. In order to belong to the inner circle—that is, to be invited to the royal entertainments and to Marly—it was necessary to be a lady of quality, admissible to the royal tables and carriages ; it was the want of this qualification which marred the happiness of Madame de Rouvroy's existence. If her husband could only obtain recognition as belonging to my family, she would have been received as a lady of quality as a matter of course. He therefore took to paying his court to me in the Galleries, and sometimes came to my rooms in the morning, ostensibly because I was a friend of M. de Pontchartrain's, with a view to furthering his advancement in the Navy. I received him civilly and did him a good turn when I could ; but I remained on my guard,

remembering the scene between his sisters and my father. This went on for several years.

At last, towards the end of Lent this year, annoyed at being omitted from the naval promotion, he came to me and spoke of his grievances with some vivacity, congratulating himself on having taken his son out of the Navy to put him into the regiment of Guards. He added that, from all he heard of his son from the Duke de Guiche and other officers, he hoped he would not disgrace the name he bore. I understood well enough what he meant. I was going to dine in Paris, and he was accompanying me down the staircase. For all reply, I asked him if I could do anything for him in town, and left him in the Gallery, looking rather confused. Before getting into my carriage I went to Madame d'Urfé and told her what had just happened. I asked her to be good enough to tell Rouvroy and his wife that, so long as their advances had been ambiguous, I had always responded to them with all the politeness they could wish ; but, after the speech he had just made to me, I must tell them plainly that I did not acknowledge any relationship between us, any more than my father or the three elder branches of my family had done ; that, in claims of this sort, proofs were necessary. I should be delighted if he could produce any to show that he was my relation ; but, if he was unable to do so, he had better refrain from making claims which he could not justify. I begged Madame d'Urfé to tell the Princess of Conti what had happened, and to say that, but for her friendship with Rouvroy's wife, I should not have taken the matter so patiently ; it was quite enough to let him usurp my name and arms, without acknowledging claims of relationship which it was evident he could not prove, since he had never made any attempt to do so.

When I returned to Versailles I met the Duke d'Aumont, who stopped me and began speaking of the trouble Rouvroy was in, saying it was not right to attack people about their birth, and that there was a great talk about it. I laughed and said I was so far from attacking this man that I had never even given myself the trouble to inquire who he was, or what right he had to his name ; but if he thought, by talking and complaining, to bully me into acknowledging his claims, or even allowing them tacitly, he was very much mistaken. M. d'Aumont replied that such matters were always delicate and unpleasant, that he spoke out of friend-

ship for myself, for Rouvroy was furious and determined to complain to the King. I said, with the same coolness, that if Rouvroy was silly enough to do so I should have the honour to lay before the King my reasons for not acknowledging him, and I thought the King would appreciate them quite as much as anything Rouvroy could say ; in short, it was not a case for clamour, but for the production of proofs, and that was a position from which I would not stir. I thought it as well, however, to take some precautions with regard to the King and Monseigneur, after which I troubled myself no further about this silly affair.

I heard afterwards that Rouvroy consulted sundry genealogists ; among them Clérembault, who told him plainly that he would never succeed in proving his claim, nor even in tracing his descent very far. To my great surprise, Mademoiselle de Lislebonne and Madame d'Espinoy advised him to drop his claims. His wife shed many tears over his folly, which she did her best to stop. At last, tired of baying at the moon, he thought he had better hold his tongue ; and I heard no more of him. I have thought it as well to mention this affair, in case any one should be led into error by the name and arms which these people usurped. I have already said, concerning Maupertuis and the family of Melun, that people can do anything they like in France with regard to such matters, and that there are no means of preventing them, or of doing oneself justice. An officer in the marine guard adopted the name and arms of Rocheschouart, to which he had no right. He was to take part in an expedition to Sicily, commanded by M. de Vivonne. The latter sent for him and thanked him, in the presence of numerous spectators, for the high opinion he evidently had of his family, since he had preferred it to so many others when looking out for a name and a coat of arms. I must now come to more interesting matter.

The Duchess of Burgundy was *enceinte*, and far from well. The King had announced that, contrary to his usual custom, he intended to go to Fontainebleau as soon as summer weather set in ; and in the meantime he wished to make his usual visits to Marly. He could not do without the company of his granddaughter, who amused him ; but so much moving about was not good for her in her present condition. Madame de Maintenon was uneasy about her, and Fagon let fall some words advising caution. All this annoyed the

King, who had never put himself under restraint on account of the Queen's health; and was, moreover, accustomed to see his mistresses make long journeys before, or immediately after, their confinements. The remonstrances about Marly teased him, but he could not be induced to give up his visits; he only yielded so far as to postpone the one which had been arranged for the day following the first Sunday after Easter; but on the Wednesday of the next week he insisted on going, and would not hear of the Princess remaining at Versailles. On the Saturday, after Mass, the King was walking in the grounds and amusing himself by watching the carp in the basin between the *château* and the avenue, when we saw the Duchess du Lude approaching by herself, although, as usual in the morning, no ladies were following the King. He understood that she had something particular to say to him, and went to meet her; when they approached each other the rest of the party fell back, and left them to converse in private. Madame du Lude retired in a few minutes; the King came back to us, and walked as far as the carp-pond without speaking. Everybody guessed what had happened, and no one was in a hurry to speak about it. At last the King, looking at the principal persons present, but addressing himself to no one in particular, said in a tone of vexation: "The Duchess of Burgundy has miscarried." Thereupon M. de la Rochefoucauld began exclaiming; M. de Bouillon, the Duke de Tresmes, and Marshal de Boufflers repeated the King's words in an undertone; and M. de la Rochefoucauld began afresh, saying how very unfortunate it was; that the Duchess had already miscarried several times, and perhaps she would have no more children. "Well, and what then?" interrupted the King, with a sudden outburst of anger. "What would it matter to me? Has not she a son already? And, if he died, is not the Duke of Berry of an age to marry and have children? What do I care which of them succeeds me! Are they not equally my grandchildren?" Then, speaking with impetuosity, he added: "Well, since she was to have a miscarriage, thank God it is over! I shall no longer be bothered and hampered in everything I want to do by the remonstrances of doctors and matrons. I shall go and come as I please, and I shall be left in peace!" A dead silence followed this outburst: the stillness was such that the sound of an ant moving would have been audible. All eyes were cast down; one hardly

ventured to breathe ; even the gardeners and masons remained motionless. After a long pause the King, leaning on a balustrade, broke the silence by making some remark about a carp. No one answered. He then began talking about the carp to some of the people belonging to the Building Department, but they could not keep up the conversation as usual. There was a general feeling of constraint, and soon afterwards the King went away.

When he was out of sight, and we ventured to look at each other, our eyes met ; there was no need of words to express what we felt ; for the moment we were all in each other's confidence. Shoulders were shrugged ; grief and astonishment were marked on every face. M. de la Rochefoucauld was beside himself with anger ; and, for once in a way, he had some reason to be so. The First Equerry was nearly fainting with terror. As for myself, I kept my eyes and ears open, and carefully marked each person's behaviour. I could not refrain from a certain feeling of self-satisfaction, for I had long ago come to the conclusion that the King loved nobody but himself, and was utterly regardless of the feelings and wishes of others. This strange speech of his made a great noise far beyond the precincts of Marly.

It sometimes happens that by means of one's servants one discovers matters which are supposed to be entirely secret. Some of my valets were friends of a saddler at Paris, who was secretly employed on things for the use of the Duke of Burgundy with the army. He was so indiscreet as to show them to my servants, and tell them what they were for ; with many injunctions to keep the secret, though he had been incapable of keeping it himself. They confided it to me ; and it opened my eyes to the meaning of a strange journey which Chamillart had just made to Flanders, in the company of Chamelay and Puységur. He started from Versailles on Easter Sunday and returned to Marly on the 20th of April, having been absent about twelve days. The bad state of his health and his starting at such a season caused his journey to be the subject of some comment. This was just the time when we were in the greatest anxiety about the expedition to Scotland ; the King of England arrived at St. Germain on the same day as Chamillart returned to Marly. It was a Friday, the day before the scene which I have just described, when the Duchess du Lude announced the miscarriage of the Duchess of Burgundy. These dates should be borne in mind.

On consideration I came to the conclusion that the destination of the Duke of Burgundy must be either the army of Flanders or that of the Rhine; and Chamillart's journey convinced me that it was the former. In fact, the object of his mission, as I heard afterwards, was to persuade the Elector of Bavaria to go to the Rhine, so as to leave to the Duke of Burgundy the command of the army in Flanders at a time when great things were expected from the Scotch expedition and the revolt of the Spanish Netherlands. On his way Chamillart met Hooke, who told him of the failure of the expedition. He was so prostrated by the news that he was unable to leave his bed for some hours. He continued his journey, however, after sending a despatch to the King; but with hopes very different from those he had entertained at starting. The change in the aspect of affairs produced no change in the projected destinations of the Generals.

The Elector was very reluctant to leave Flanders, where he held a respectable position in what remained of his own dominions, and was fighting only the English and Dutch; whereas if he went to the Rhine he would appear to be a mere mercenary commander, and would moreover be directly opposed to the troops of the Emperor, whom it was not his interest to irritate more than he could help. Chamillart, though very short of money, was forced to offer pecuniary inducements; and after much trouble the Elector consented to go to the Rhine for a sum of 400,000 livres in addition to the pensions, subsidies, and other payments which he received from the King. Even then he changed his mind, and Chamillart was obliged to offer him 400,000 livres more, making 800,000 in all, which finally decided him.

Villars was at Strasbourg, meditating the siege of Philipsburg to assist the revolt in the Netherlands in case the Scotch expedition succeeded. After his quarrels with the Elector it was impossible for them to act together; Chamillart was therefore authorised to offer Berwick to the Elector as his coadjutor, and the offer was accepted. Villars was immediately recalled, and sent to command in Dauphiné, in place of Tessé, who had desired to be relieved. I mention these matters a little in advance, so as not to interrupt the thread of my narrative. It was not till some time afterwards that I found out about the pecuniary bargain with the Elector.

CHAPTER IV

1708

An important conversation with M. de Beauvilliers—I remonstrate against sending the Duke of Burgundy to Flanders, and predict unfortunate consequences—M. de Beauvilliers is unconvinced and angry—The King announces the appointment of the Duke of Burgundy—The Duke of Berry to serve as a volunteer—The King of England to serve under the name of Chevalier de St. Georges—Bergheyck and Puységur sent to confer with Vendôme—The hero snubs them—The King shows Samuel Bernard over the grounds at Marly and extracts much-needed supplies from him—Death of Mansart—Hasty departure of a bridge—Mansart's bad taste—Rivals for his office—Death of La Frette—His duel and its consequences—Death of the Countess de Grammont—Chamillart in trouble—I advise him to speak openly to the King—Satisfactory result.

ONE fine evening, a day or two after our arrival at Marly, M. de Beauvilliers, wishing to have some conversation with me, took me to the lower end of the gardens, near the horses' watering-place, where the surroundings are bare, and it is possible to talk without being overheard. I told him what I had discovered about the Duke of Burgundy; he was rather taken aback, but admitted that it was true; he then proceeded to tell me the reasons for sending the Duke to Flanders. In the wretched state of our affairs, he said, it was necessary to revive the spirit of the troops by the presence of the heir-apparent to the Crown; it was unbecoming for a young man of his position to remain in idleness while his house was burning on all sides; the King of England was about to take part in the campaign; it was high time for the Duke of Berry to see something of war, and he could hardly be sent if his brother remained at home; extreme licence prevailed in the army of Flanders, encouraged by the very persons who ought to have stopped it, and it could only be repressed by a man of the Prince's authority; he had in his first two campaigns given proofs of zeal and military talent, it would therefore be wise to profit by his reputation and at the same time give him the opportunity of gaining fresh experience; there would be

little or nothing doing on the Rhine or in Dauphiné, consequently Flanders was the obvious destination for him; and these reasons combined had led the King to the wise determination of sending him there.

I quite concurred in the Duke's sentiments as to the idleness of the young Princes, and the desirability of giving them military experience; but I ventured to differ from him on every other point. I said it was a pity that the Duke of Burgundy had not continued to command armies; but, as he had ceased to do so for several years, the present crisis did not seem a favourable opportunity for him to begin again. We had suffered many losses and defeats; our troops had lost all faith in their commanders, and had got into the habit of thinking themselves beaten beforehand, so that they made no stand against the enemy; it seemed to me that it was unwise to put the Duke of Burgundy at the head of an army which thought it had done well if it merely held its ground without sustaining a disaster, for even a slight defeat with him in command would be very painful and embarrassing. Moreover, I said, the private life to which the Prince had become accustomed was unsuited for active military service, and it would be difficult for him to change it; the difference of their habits would enable the younger brother to shine at the expense of the elder—a very dangerous thing; but the greatest objection of all was the presence of the Duke de Vendôme. Here M. de Beauvilliers interrupted me. "It is for that very reason," he said, "that we find it necessary to send the Duke of Burgundy. He is the only person with sufficient authority to stimulate the sloth of M. de Vendôme, to force him to take precautions, the neglect of which has so often cost us dear. It is his presence alone which can rouse the zeal of the Generals and make them do their duty; only he can bridle the licentiousness of the private soldiers, and restore the good order and discipline which M. de Vendôme has utterly destroyed since he assumed the command in Flanders." I could not help smiling at his optimism; I answered that, for my part, I felt assured that things would turn out very differently from his expectations, and the end of it would be the ruin of the Duke of Burgundy. It is difficult to describe the astonishment of M. de Beauvilliers at this reply; I let him interrupt me, and then asked him to listen patiently to what I had to say.

I told him that to arrive at my conclusions it was only necessary to know the two men ; for fire and water were not more incompatible than the Duke of Burgundy and M. de Vendôme. The first, I said, was a timid devotee, cautious to excess, yet hot-tempered and imperious ; in spite of his natural ability he was simple-minded and reserved ; fearing to do wrong by entertaining unjust suspicions ; with little knowledge of the people he had to deal with ; habitually absent-minded, and too much in the habit of attaching importance to trifles. Vendôme, on the other hand, was audacious, impudent, and domineering ; wedded to his own ideas with an obstinacy which no experience had been able to cure ; intolerant of restraint or contradiction, and impatient in the presence of any one superior to himself ; habitually given up to the most disgusting debauchery, which he paraded ostentatiously ; perfectly unscrupulous ; devoid alike of truth, honour, and principle ; a man who stuck at nothing ; whose brazen effrontery could carry off anything, and who had come to believe that he had nothing to fear and that there was nothing to which he might not aspire. The truth of this sketch would, I said, be recognised by any one who knew the two men ; it was impossible that they could be long together without quarrelling ; when public affairs suffered from their differences, as they inevitably would, the blame would be bandied about from one to the other ; the army would take sides ; the weaker man would go to the wall ; and the weaker would not be Vendôme, who, unrestrained by any scruples and backed by his cabal, would ruin the young Prince irretrievably. On a theatre of vice such as the army, I added, vice would make virtue an object of contempt ; experience would prove too strong for youth, and impudence for timidity. The man who encouraged licentiousness for the sake of popularity would have no difficulty in rendering a young censor odious ; popular feeling in the army would abandon one from whom nothing was to be hoped or feared, and rally round Vendôme, whose audacity was boundless, and who had struck such terror into the officers in Italy that, so long as he remained with the army, the ink had frozen in their pens.

M. de Beauvilliers, with all his gentleness, now began to lose patience and tried to interrupt me, but I begged him to listen to the end. " But is it possible," he said, " that you can have anything more to say ? " " I have indeed,"

I replied, "and on a still more important point, if you will be good enough to allow me a little more time. We have talked over the question with regard to the army : there is still the Court to be considered. The King is seventy years old, and you know how people's minds turn to the future, especially when they have not much to hope for in the present. Mademoiselle Choin treats the Duke and Duchess of Burgundy with the utmost coldness ; she rules Monseigneur, in conjunction with the Prince of Conti and M. de Vendôme ; you can have no difficulty in guessing which side she will take. You know what influence Madame la Duchesse also has over Monseigneur, and you are aware that she detests the Duchess of Burgundy. Mademoiselle de Lislebonne and Madame d'Espinoy are the ruling spirits at Meudon ; Monseigneur spends nearly every morning *tête-à-tête* with them ; they also wish to govern him, and to enable their uncle, M. de Vaudemont, to do so. At present all these persons form a united band ; after the King's death they will no doubt quarrel among themselves for the exclusive possession of a Prince too dull to be capable of choosing or acting for himself ; but, in the meantime, it is their interest to combine, in order to prevent any person outside their own clique from obtaining a hold over him. You know that, with the exception of Madame la Duchesse, these people are in close alliance with Vendôme ; all that occurred in Italy shows that he can rely confidently on them for support. Every member of this clique has influence over Chamillart ; you cannot disguise from yourself that in combination they will make him see everything from their point of view, and act in their interests ; without the slightest regard for you, or for any other consideration. M. du Maine also is hand-in-glove with Vendôme and his party.

"But this is not all. The Duke of Burgundy is nearly twenty-six years old ; his virtue, industry, and ability have attracted the attention of Europe, and raised the hopes of the French nation. He did well in his two campaigns with the army ; he has been even more successful in the Council. Although the Court is rather alarmed by the austerity of his morals, it looks up to him with a respect which it is impossible to withhold. If he goes on as he has begun it is clear that, when he becomes Dauphin, under a father possessing neither acquirements nor industry, and already

old at the time of his succession, he will, with his experience of public affairs, be the real chief of the Government, and consequently the distributor of favours. Now, it would be a death-blow to the schemes of the persons I have mentioned if Monseigneur, when he ascends the throne, should be under the influence of his eldest son. It will be too late for them to attempt to destroy that influence if the Duke of Burgundy, at the time of the King's death, is universally respected as he is to-day. They cannot hope for success unless they can contrive some means to ruin his reputation during the King's lifetime, and reduce him to a condition of discredit and impotence. No one who knows them will suppose for a moment that they will let any weak scruples stand in the way of their interests.

“But you may say that, granting all this, it would be almost impossible to succeed in a plot for the downfall of a Prince such as the Duke of Burgundy. Now, it seems to me that the improbable thing is that such a monstrous design should occur to any one's mind ; once conceived, I believe it would be by no means difficult to carry it into execution. Opportunities would not readily present themselves in the ordinary quiet routine of court life, but during a campaign the circumstances will be altogether changed. The Duke of Burgundy will be in nominal command of an army badly equipped in many respects, wanting in discipline, and, unfortunately, discouraged by a long succession of reverses. The real Commander is a General whose slack discipline has won the hearts of the common soldiers, while at the same time the senior officers tremble before him. If it is to his interest to cast discredit on the young Prince he will not find it difficult to set pitfalls into which he can hardly avoid falling. The virtuous habits of the Duke of Burgundy will be held up to ridicule in an army to which virtue is unknown ; he will find himself in the invidious position of a youthful censor of slackness and licence ; in order to check disorder it will be necessary to make examples, and all the odium will be cast on him ; if he makes a point of regularity and discipline he will be called pedantic and narrow-minded ; if he insists on the most ordinary precautions it will be set down to timidity, and doubts will be cast on his courage. It will be easy for Vendôme to propose hazardous enterprises which he would be sorry to attempt in reality, in order to throw the odium of their rejection on the Prince ; people

will sneer at a young man who, at an age when his boiling courage and thirst for glory might be expected to require a restraining hand, is content to act as a clog on a General of ability and long experience. In short, it will be Vendôme's cue to oppose the Prince in everything, especially to advocate giving battle under the most impossible circumstances ; and yet to miss the chance of doing so when it presents itself naturally, so as to attach the stigma of cowardice to him. He will have emissaries who, though ignorant of his real designs, will report his differences with the Prince ; the gossip of the army will give the latter the blame for all inaction and all failures ; this gossip will find echoes in the Court, in Paris, and throughout the kingdom. Monseigneur's mind will be poisoned against his son ; he will be the first to cast a stone at him, and the courtiers will not be slow to follow his example. Then all the persons I have mentioned will make the best of their opportunities, and artfully pull the strings from their lurking-places behind the tapestry. The Duchess of Burgundy will weep ; but reasoning, not tears, will be required ; and who will attempt to reason amid such a tumult ? Or who will venture to oppose the cabal, merely to be marked down as its victim at the first opportunity ? Madame de Maintenon will grieve with the Princess, but she will be over-persuaded by M. du Maine. The King will listen to the veiled sarcasms of that dear son of his love ; he will also lend an ear to the valets of his household, who dislike the contrast between the reserved manners of the Duke of Burgundy and the familiarity of Vendôme and M. du Maine. The Prince will have against him all the fashion, wit, and gossip of the Court ; on his side will be nothing but truth and silence. If, on the top of all this, the army of Flanders should meet with one of those disasters which have been only too familiar to us of late years, it will be the finishing stroke ; you will see M. de Vendôme emerge in triumph, and the Duke of Burgundy will be ruined in reputation—ruined, not only at our Court, not only in France, but in the eyes of all Europe ! ”

M. de Beauvilliers' stock of patience was almost exhausted before I had finished speaking ; he then rebuked me gravely and severely for letting my mind dwell on such fantastic and extravagant notions, which had no foundation except my disgust at Vendôme's vices and my aversion for his rank and birth. Whatever M. de Vendôme might be,

he said, he was not so foolish as to enter deliberately upon a struggle with the heir-apparent to the Crown, a Prince beloved by the King and respected by everybody ; whose voice, on the rare occasions when he spoke in the Council, was listened to with surprising attention, and exercised real influence on the decisions. He commented at some length, and rather bitterly, on my excessive prejudices, and the silliness (he was too polite to use that word, but he let me see what he meant) of thinking that any one would really enter into a plot to ruin the heir of the Royal House ; who must retain that position, whatever happened, and must some day reign in his turn. I replied that I was not convinced by his arguments, but would willingly submit to his superior judgement, especially as we were discussing a project which had already been definitely settled ; I added that I hoped, as sincerely as any one, that my misgivings might prove to be unfounded, but I should have reproached myself if I had not confided them to him.

He then became more calm, and we proceeded to talk of the line of conduct most suitable for the Duke of Burgundy while with the army, concerning which we were both of one mind. We thought he ought to show his anxiety to learn by conversing with the best general officers ; to make frequent expeditions to reconnoitre the country and acquaint himself with the positions of the camps and outposts ; to be easy of access with the officers, and show himself frequently to the troops ; to be hospitable and cheerful at his own table, though avoiding long sittings, and never permitting any disrespectful liberties ; to be careful to show deference to M. de Vendôme, and try to make a friend of him ; to shut his eyes to a good deal that went on, keep his tongue under restraint, and allow no tale-bearing ; and, with all his gracious manners, to maintain his dignity, gravity, and authority. We deplored the lamentable choice of persons for the suite of the two Princes ; for the Duke of Burgundy, D'O and Gamaches, of whom I have already spoken sufficiently ; and, for the Duke of Berry, only Rasily, a worthy man and full of honour, but of moderate capacity, who had been brought up to be an ecclesiastic, and was now going on, literally, his first campaign. No private gentleman would have let his son go without a more suitable attendant.

After this we separated. I was still so convinced that

my fears were well-founded that I could not refrain from mentioning them to the Duke de Chevreuse, telling him that I had spoken more fully to the Duke de Beauvilliers. I found him equally convinced that the Duke of Burgundy's campaign would turn out well; more so, indeed, because he was naturally optimistic and always saw the bright side of things. They both related this conversation to their wives, from whom they had hardly any secrets; and M. de Beauvilliers, who had been more shocked by what I had said than he had cared to show me, came and expostulated with Madame de Saint-Simon. To appease him, I promised never to allude to the subject again, on condition that he would bear in mind everything that I had said.

On Monday, the 30th of April, the King announced the destinations of the Generals, as I have stated them. He gave out that the Duke of Berry would accompany his brother as a volunteer, and that their suite would consist of the three men whom I have mentioned. It was also announced that the King of England would serve with the army in Flanders, but strictly *incognito*, under the name of the Chevalier de St. Georges. Villars could not conceal his wrath at being removed from his lucrative command in Germany; Berwick, though he said less, was no better pleased at being placed under a master, especially one so little suited to him in habits and temper as the Elector of Bavaria; and both he and the Elector were in a very bad temper at having to leave Flanders.

When the King came out of his private room on the morning of the 4th of May he found Marshal de Mattignon in attendance, and at once told him that he was to serve with the army of Flanders under the Duke of Vendôme; in whose name, as well as in his own, he offered the Marshal all the flattery and compliments with which he knew so well how to season favours of this strange kind. This eighteenth Marshal of France was not ashamed to express his thanks profusely; and, more disgraceful still, to pay the most fulsome respect to the master who had been set over him. Of course he knew what was to happen, and had been well coached beforehand by Chamillart. It is incredible how freely people expressed themselves concerning this appointment. The other Marshals, together with every officer who aspired to that rank, were furious. Mattignon was the

subject of general censure ; it was said that he had degraded the *bâton* : the bitterest and most outspoken remarks were made about him in full saloon at Marly. Not one of the seven or eight Marshals who were there would speak to Mattignon, and their example was followed by everybody ; I mean, literally, everybody ; at his approach every group dispersed and every seat was left empty. I never saw anything so marked. Even Marshal de Noailles, usually the most servile of men, complained loudly. Though I was not on very good terms with him, he came up to me and asked what I thought of such a strange novelty. I replied coldly that since Princes of Vendôme's sort had for some years taken precedence of us Peers in Parliament, it did not seem so very surprising that they should also be set over Marshals of France in the Army. It is not easy to understand the feelings of our Princes with regard to the dignity of Marshal of France ; it is the only one which has continually risen in estimation, and it has been adorned by men of the most indisputable birth and distinction, yet it is the only one which the bastard or foreign Princes despise as beneath their acceptance, while they eagerly run after the other offices of the Crown. But how different are the functions of those offices ! The Grand Chamberlain's duties are merely to serve the King while dressing, and, on certain occasions, at dinner ; he has no one under his command. The Grand Equerry helps the King on to his horse, and manages the Great Stable ; he is in reality no greater personage than the First Equerry. The Colonel-General of infantry and the Grand-Master of Artillery have, it is true, soldiers under their command ; but when serving on a campaign they have to obey the Marshals of France. The Grand-Master of France, who for a long time has always been a Prince of the Blood, commands nobody but cooks, and his functions relate entirely to feasting. I may add that the Princes of the Blood themselves become Colonels and Generals, and rank with other officers of the same grade according to seniority. What more can they aspire to in their profession than the rank of Marshal of France ? And yet no Prince will accept the *bâton* ! It is a whim which is perfectly incomprehensible. German Princes, even Sovereigns, do not share it ; they are delighted to be made Field-M Marshals ; and yet they would not be pleased with any one who should suggest their yielding precedence

to our bastard Princes, or to any member of the House of Lorraine !

Vendôme acted on this occasion as he had done when he extracted from the King the informal permission to command the Marshals of France in Italy ; he set off at once, for fear the King should change his mind. He would not even wait till next day, the 5th of May, when Bergheyck was to arrive from Flanders for the express purpose of consulting with him about matters connected with the coming campaign ; but went to Clichy with the intention of starting for Flanders on the 7th. Bergheyck could not be long spared from Flanders without great inconvenience to the public service. He arrived late on Saturday, the 5th of May ; on Sunday morning he saw the King and Chamillart on business ; after which the King ordered him to go, with Chamlay and Puységur, to Clichy, confer with M. de Vendôme, and return at once to report the result. This is a good illustration both of Vendôme's boundless pride and of the King's complaisance for him. Surely it would have been simpler to detain Vendôme one day longer at Marly to see Bergheyck and confer with him in the King's presence, rather than waste Bergheyck's time by sending him to Clichy and back.

However, Bergheyck, Puységur, and Chamlay had to go there in search of M. de Vendôme. They found him in the saloon of Crosat's house, surrounded by a numerous but not very distinguished company, walking up and down with his hands behind his back. As soon as they entered he went up to them and asked what brought them ; they explained that they were sent by the King. Without even drawing them aside to a window he made them explain their business in a low voice. The reply of the hero was brief and to the point. He said out loud that he should be at the frontier almost as soon as Bergheyck, and would see him there ; as he could settle matters more easily on the spot. Thereupon, with a half-bow, he turned on his heel and rejoined the company, leaving the three envoys stupefied. Although they knew him well enough, they had not expected so contemptuous a reception of persons in their position, sent expressly by the King to confer with him on important public affairs, with orders to return and report the very same day ! The King was surprised to see them back so soon, and asked the reason. They

looked at each other in silence ; then Puységur, bolder than the others, explained the result of their journey. The King could not refrain from a gesture which showed what he thought of it ; but, after a momentary silence, he sent them to work and dine with Chamillart ; telling Bergheyck that, after dinner, he would show him the gardens.

I must not omit a trifle which occurred on this occasion of the King's doing the honours of the gardens ; I was an eye-witness, for curiosity to see people's faces and hear their comments on the result of the journey to Clichy prevented me from losing anything of it. About five o'clock the King came out on foot, and passed in front of all the pavilions on the side of Marly. Bergheyck came out of Chamillart's pavilion, and joined his suite. At the next pavilion the King stopped ; it was where Desmarets had his quarters, and he came out, accompanied by the famous Samuel Bernard, the richest banker in Europe, who had been dining with him. The King told Desmarets that he was glad to see him with M. Bernard ; then, turning to the latter, " I daresay you have never seen Marly," he said. " Come with me during my walk, and I will show it to you ; I will let you go back to Desmarets afterwards." Bernard followed him, and during the whole walk the King talked only to him and Bergheyck, taking them about and showing them everything with the graciousness which he knew so well how to put on when he wanted to do a great favour. I was astonished (and I was not the only one) that the King, usually so sparing of his words, should prostitute himself, so to speak, in this fashion to a man like Bernard. It was not long before I discovered the reason, and then I was astonished to see to what straits the greatest Kings are sometimes reduced.

Desmarets did not know which way to turn ; the scarcity of everything was frightful, and the treasury was exhausted. He had knocked at the door of every financier in Paris ; but the Government had so often broken its promises, even when most solemnly given, that he met with nothing but excuses and refusals. Bernard, like the others, refused to advance a sou ; large sums were already due to him ; and though Desmarets reminded him how much he had made out of his former transactions, and explained the urgent necessity, he was not to be moved. The King and his Minister were in great embarrassment ; Desmarets told

him that only Bernard could get them out of the difficulty, for there was no doubt he had the money ; that, with all his insolent obstinacy, he was a man beside himself with vanity, and if the King would condescend to flatter him he might perhaps open his purse. In the cruel position of affairs the King consented ; and, to try the experiment with some show of decency, and without risking a refusal, Desmarets suggested the scene which I have just described. Bernard was completely taken in ; he returned to Desmarets' house so enchanted with his walk that he said at once he would rather incur the risk of ruin than leave his Sovereign in such embarrassment ; the King, he said, had loaded him with favours ; and he launched out into enthusiastic praises of him. Desmarets seized the opportunity at once, and got a good deal more out of Bernard than he had originally intended.

During this visit to Marly, Mansart, Superintendent of Buildings, died very suddenly ; a personage who deserves a few remarks. He was a stout, well-built man, with an agreeable countenance. By birth he belonged to the dregs of the people ; he had a good deal of natural talent, especially for making himself liked ; but he never quite got rid of the vulgarity of his class. He began life as a common mason, but was taken in hand by Mansart, the famous architect, who pushed him on in the King's service, and tried to educate and make something of him. He called himself Mansart's nephew, but it was suspected that he was his bastard, and after his death in 1666 he adopted his name to give himself some distinction. He rose by degrees, and became known to the King, who by this time bestowed his familiarity on valets and masons instead of on great noblemen, as in former days. The King saw that he possessed the merit of obscurity and low birth ; he fancied he also discerned in him some of the genius of his uncle ; and, as we have seen, he was glad of an opportunity to remove Villacerf from his office of Superintendent and put Mansart in his place. Mansart, however, was ignorant of his profession ; and his brother-in-law, de Coste, whom he made Chief Architect, knew very little more about it than he did. They used to get all their plans and designs from a draughtsman in the department named L'Assurance ; whom they kept, as far as possible, under lock and key.

Mansart's cleverness consisted in leading the King on to engage in undertakings which at first appeared to be mere trifles, but eventually turned out very long and expensive. He would also show him imperfect designs, especially for the gardens; taking care that it should be easy to see where the fault lay. Then, when the King pointed out what was wrong, Mansart would be lost in admiration, and declare that he was a mere school-boy compared to his master; in this way he got the King to agree unsuspectingly to whatever he wanted. On the plea of bringing plans, he obtained admission to the King's private rooms; and after a time he could go there at all hours, even when he had no business relating to his office. By degrees he joined in the conversation during these hours of privacy; the King got into the habit of asking him questions about the news of the day and other matters; sometimes he ventured to ask questions himself; but, as he understood the King thoroughly, he knew how to choose his time, and avoided the mistake of becoming too familiar. He never took advantage of his privileges to injure any one, but it would not have been wise to offend him. In this way he became a sort of personage; and not only noblemen and Princes of the Blood, but bastards, Ministers, and even the valets of the household, had to treat him with respect. Though he never really forgot himself, his native vulgarity sometimes made him ridiculously familiar in his manner; he would take a Son of France by the sleeve, or tap a Prince of the Blood on the shoulder; his behaviour to other persons may be easily imagined.

The King, who was highly displeased if the courtiers did not consult Fagon when they were unwell, had the same weakness for Mansart; and any one who was building or had gardens to lay out, acted very unwisely if he did not put himself in his hands. But Mansart was not skilful. He built a bridge at Moulins, which he considered a masterpiece of stability, and was very proud of it. Four or five months after it was finished Charlus, father of the Duke de Lévi, came to the King's *lever*; he had just left his country-house, which was close to Moulins. He was a discontented sort of man, very witty and sarcastic. Mansart was there, and, fishing for compliments, began talking of the bridge. Charlus said not a word. The King, seeing that he did not join in the conversation, asked him if he had

anything to say about the bridge of Moulins. "I have heard nothing, Sir, since the departure," said Charlus; "but I should think Nantes is the most likely address at present." "Why, of whom do you think I am speaking?" said the King. "I was asking you about the bridge of Moulins!" "Just so, Sir," said Charlus drily, "I mean the bridge of Moulins. The day before I left home it started off all of a sudden, and went away down the river!" It was a fact. The King and Mansart were very much taken aback, and the courtiers had to turn aside to conceal their amusement. Some time before Mansart had built a bridge at Blois, which played him the same trick.

The King and he were equally devoid of taste, and the consequence was that, with all their enormous expenditure, their buildings were never really beautiful, nor even convenient. Monseigneur declined to employ him any more at Meudon, because he perceived (or rather, other people pointed out to him) that Mansart was leading him on to prodigious undertakings. The King ought to have been pleased with Monseigneur, and angry with Mansart; on the contrary, he did his best to reconcile them, and even offered to bear a large proportion of the cost of Mansart's proposed works. Monseigneur, however, was so annoyed at being taken for a dupe that he refused. It was Dupont who told me this; he was always angry about it. The chapel at Versailles, beautiful so far as its ornamentation and workmanship are concerned, is badly proportioned, and its upper story looks like a sarcophagus which crushes the *château*; it was purposely designed in this way through one of Mansart's artifices. He calculated its proportions only from the base of the upper story, because the King hardly ever had occasion to see it from the ground-floor; and he made that hideous excrescence on the roof of the *château* in order that the King might be compelled to add another story to the whole building, so as to conceal it; and, but for the war which broke out, it would have been done.

Mansart died of a colic which carried him off in twelve hours, and gave rise to a good deal of talk. Fagon, who took possession of the case, declared at once, rather airily, that he could not recover. He attributed his illness to gorging himself at dinner with green peas and other rarities of the kitchen-garden, with which he used to regale himself (so Fagon said) before the King ever tasted them. It was

rumoured, however, that the farmers of the post-office revenue bore him a grudge. They always contrive to parry any attempt to diminish their enormous gains, and had a short time before induced the Government to refuse a higher bid for their contract, though made by substantial persons. It was said they had found out that Mansart had promised to lay before the King certain documents relating to this transaction, and that he had refused an offer of 40,000 livres a year which they made him, on condition of his letting the matter drop. The extraordinary swelling of his body immediately after death, and certain suspicious spots which were discovered when it was opened, gave rise to these rumours, whether true or false.

What is certain is that, a few days before his death, he had complained to Desmarets that there was no money in hand for carrying on the buildings, and begged for an immediate advance. Desmarets, who, as we have seen, did not know where to turn for money, replied that Mansart should have no more till he had accounted for the last payments made to him. Mansart was extremely angry at this demand, which seemed to cast a doubt on his honesty ; he refused to comply with it, on the ground that, as Superintendent, he was simply an administrator, and that it was not his business to keep accounts. Desmarets replied harshly that he might talk as much as he liked, but he should not have a *sou* till he had shown how the 400,000 or 500,000 livres had been spent which he received not long ago. Thereupon Mansart went to complain to the King ; but found him so strongly on the side of the Controller-General that, when he attempted to remonstrate, he received a severe reprimand. It was thought that the trouble caused by this unexpected rebuff, and his efforts to conceal it, gave his health a shock which killed him. During his illness the King seemed much grieved, and kept sending to ask how he was. The fuss which it caused in the saloon was really absurd, considering that it was about a private person of Mansart's class. D'Antin was there in tears ; he said they were not so much for Mansart as for the King's affliction at losing a man of his merit. His tears were soon dried, and he was sorry he had shed them.

More than a month elapsed without the appointment of a successor to Mansart, during which his office was coveted by many persons of all ranks. It was worth, in Mansart's time, more than 50,000 crowns yearly ; and the King was

offered 3,000,000 livres for it. He decided, however, to take advantage of the vacancy to diminish its importance. He announced that he would be his own Superintendent of Buildings, and sign all documents himself; doing, in fact, on a small scale, what he had done on a greater when he abolished the office of Superintendent of Finance, on Fouquet's downfall, and made Colbert Controller-General. The same result followed in both cases. Colbert, who had brought about Fouquet's ruin, dared not aspire to be Superintendent, but he was determined to keep all the authority of the office. This he managed by overwhelming the King with documents for his signature. In this way he made the King believe that he was doing everything himself; whereas in reality Colbert, and his successors after him, retained all Fouquet's power, with the additional safeguard of the King's signature to all documents. Exactly the same thing happened now. The King announced that he would appoint a Director-General of Buildings under himself; and this Director, though his wings were clipped as much as possible, followed Colbert's example in everything; with only one exception—that of his honesty, as appeared only too plainly during his administration, and after his death when his will was opened.

Gossip was busy with the names of several candidates for the office, but I can only be sure of three who asked for it: the First Equerry, La Vrillière, and d'Antin. The first two looked upon d'Antin as their most formidable rival; for he had the powerful support of the bastards, and also of the Noailles, who at that time were in the highest favour. But he was a very clever man, and in general the King was afraid of clever men, and disliked having them about his person; moreover, d'Antin had the reputation of filling his pockets whenever he had the chance—a dangerous propensity in a Director of Public Buildings. His supporters, however, were not to be denied; by the help of Madame la Duchesse they won over Monseigneur to their side, and for the first time in his life he ventured to express a wish to the King, namely, that the appointment should be given to d'Antin. But the affair still dragged on, and his rivals did not lose all hope.

One afternoon the First Equerry, who had just handed the King into his carriage, came to my room, where he found Madame de Saint-Simon and myself alone, for the guests

who had dined with us had already left. He told us, with an air of great delight, that, in spite of all d'Antin's supporters, he thought he had no chance of the appointment. Some of the valets of the household, who were present, had reported to him that the King had that morning told Monseigneur he had a question to put to him, and wished for a straightforward answer. "Is it true," he went on, "that, on one occasion when you were winning highly at cards, you gave d'Antin your hat to hold, and threw your money into it as you won it; and that, happening to look round, you surprised him in the act of taking money out of the hat, and putting it into his pocket?" Monseigneur said nothing, but his downcast eyes showed that the story was true. "I understand you, Monseigneur," said the King; "I have no further questions to ask." Whereupon Monseigneur left the room. We agreed with the First Equerry that the question must have been asked with reference to the Directorship of Buildings, and that d'Antin was certainly excluded. Next day, la Vrillière told me the same story, in high delight at having got rid of so dangerous a rival.

Four days afterwards it was announced that the appointment was given to d'Antin, and, to confound still further those who attempt to draw logical conclusions in court matters, the King paid Monseigneur the compliment of desiring that he should be the person to announce his good-fortune to d'Antin. The latter was in transports of joy; he said that now the spell was broken for good and all, and he had no more to fear for his fortune. He soon obtained all Mansart's *entrées*, and more; before long he contrived to amuse the King, and completely won his heart. It seemed odd that a *seigneur* should, with reason, consider his fortune made by succeeding to the leavings of an apprentice-mason; especially as the authority and emoluments of the office had been reduced by two-thirds. But the reduction was all nonsense; d'Antin soon had more power than Mansart, and made greater profits, though he went about it in a different way. In short, he became a personage, and went on rising steadily from that time forth.

La Frette died very suddenly about this time. I have already alluded to the famous duel which forced him and his brother to fly the country. They were, perhaps, the two handsomest and most conceited men in France; their family name was Gruel, and their rank barely that of gentlemen.

Their grandfather attached himself to the first Count de Soissons, who obtained for him a Collar of the Order in the promotion of 1595. It is of him that the story is told that, when, being invested with the Collar, he said : " Domine, non sum dignus " ¹ (an answer which has fallen into desuetude, or perhaps was never made in reality), Henry IV replied : " I know that, I know that ; but I give it you at the request of my cousin de Soissons." The two La Frettes now in question were half-brothers of the Duchess de Chaulnes, and first-cousins to the Duke de Beauvilliers.

M. de Chaulnes, being at Rome on special embassies in 1667 and 1670, played a considerable part in the elections of Clement IX and Clement X ; he was on very good terms with the latter, and begged him to use his influence with the King to obtain the pardon of the two La Frettes. The Pope did it with a good grace ; he insisted so strongly on absolving the King from the oath which he had taken about duelling that, although the King would not create a bad precedent by pardoning them openly, he promised that they should be free to return to Paris and enjoy all their revenues under assumed names. They came back accordingly, and were everywhere announced and addressed by their own names ; only they refrained from using their arms or liveries, and never appeared in any public place. They lived in this way ever afterwards, under the tacit protection of the King. An affair occurred which made a great stir ; and Flamarin, first Maître d'Hôtel to Monsieur, was implicated in it to such a degree that a search was made for him everywhere, even in the precincts of the Palais-Royal. Monsieur was very angry at this as a mark of disrespect for him ; he complained to the King, adding that he was the more offended because no notice was taken of the two La Frettes, who had been going about Paris quite openly for several years. The King replied gravely that the thing was impossible ; and, on Monsieur insisting that it was true, he assured him that he would make inquiries, and if they were at Paris they should be arrested within twenty-four hours. At the same time he sent them warning to leave Paris for two or three days, after which they might come back and live as usual. He then ordered an ostentatious search to be made for them throughout Paris ; taking care, however, to tell the police not to begin till they were quite sure the La Frettes were

¹ " My lord, I am not worthy."

out of the way. It was Monsieur's own fault if he did not discover that the King was amusing himself at his expense. The elder brother died long before the younger. Never did people turn to better account the reputation of a duel, their death in the eye of the law, and the unique distinction of this tacit protection on the part of the King. Neither of them ever married.

The Countess de Grammont died on the 3rd of June, aged sixty-seven years. She was a Hamilton, of the ancient and illustrious Scotch family of that name. Her parents were Catholics, and she was brought up from childhood at Port-Royal-des-Champs ; her affection for that place was constant throughout her period of youth, beauty, and gallantry, and, as we have seen, no fear of incurring the royal displeasure could prevent her from showing it. She was very proud and haughty ; always knew what was due to her, and insisted upon it ; but she was equally punctilious in treating other people with the respect due to them ; she was very clever, agreeable, and witty ; very select in the choice of her company, and, still more, of her friends. The whole Court treated her with distinction ; and even the Ministers looked upon her as a person to be taken into account. No one knew her husband better than she did ; yet she lived with him on very good terms, and, extraordinary as it may seem, it is a fact that she never got over his death, though she was herself rather ashamed of her grief. Her last years were given up altogether to God. She had wished to retire from Court as soon as she became a widow ; but the King opposed it so strongly that she had to remain. It was not for long ; her infirmities soon compelled her to retire, and she died in the second year of her mourning. She left only two daughters ; both very clever, very dangerous, and very gallant ; they had been Maids of Honour to the Bavarian Dauphiness, and had no fortune. One of them married a horrid Lord Stafford, whom nobody would meet, and who spent his time at the Tuileries and the theatres. She separated from him, and after his death went to live in England. The other sister became Abbess of Poussay, where she became converted and lived in sincere penitence. As they had absolutely nothing Madame de Grammont wrote on her death-bed to the King and Madame de Maintenon, begging that her pension might be continued to her daughters. The first of these letters was treated with

neglect, the other with contempt ; there was no reply, and no pension. So much for the respect paid to dying wishes, even when expressed by persons who have been loved and honoured all their lives !

During Chamillart's brief journey to Flanders he had quarrelled with Bagnolz, Intendant of Lille, a man who was much trusted and had great influence. He took upon himself to dismiss from the service, for some rascality, a Commissary of the army, who was Bagnolz' *protégé*. Bagnolz did all he could to save him, even going so far as to tell Chamillart that, if this man was a thief, he must himself have had a share of the plunder. Chamillart would not give way ; whereupon Bagnolz took upon himself to reinstate the Commissary in defiance of the Minister. Strong letters passed between them ; Bagnolz appealed to the King ; all his friends bestirred themselves, as did Chamillart's enemies. There never was such a noise about a trifle ; not had an Intendant ever been known to act in such a high-handed way in opposition to a Minister, his chief. In the end Chamillart had his way, but it was with great difficulty, and he strained his influence with the King seriously. Then Bagnolz resigned, and there was another storm ; the King, who was satisfied with him, wished to keep him ; advances were made to him, in which Chamillart himself joined, conscious that the King was displeased. Bagnolz was spoilt ; the more they tried to conciliate him the higher his pretensions grew. The end of it was that he did resign, and came to make mischief at Paris, while Chamillart's credit with the King was most seriously damaged.

Since the marriage in Chamillart's family Madame de Maintenon looked upon him as a man who had failed her, and her affection for him had been succeeded by aversion. I have explained why it was that it was necessary for her to have a Minister of her own, and since she could no longer trust Chamillart she had none. She wished, therefore, to replace him by another, and she had his successor ready to her hand in Voysin. Quite contrary to his usual habits, the King went on the 4th of June to dine at Meudon, with the Duchess of Burgundy, Madame de Maintenon, and some other ladies. There Madame de Maintenon had a private interview with Mademoiselle Choin, who was furious with Chamillart because, being naturally obstinate and his temper

being soured by ill-health, he had persistently refused to give the command of a small infantry regiment to her brother, an officer of considerable service. Mademoiselle de Lislebonne and Madame d'Espinoy had done all they could to persuade Chamillart ; at last, annoyed by his obstinate refusals, and not wishing the blame to fall on themselves, they told Mademoiselle Choin all that had passed. I heard this from his daughter, Madame de Dreux, the only member of his family who had any common sense ; she was much annoyed about the affair. I also heard through Marshal de Boufflers and the Duke and Duchess de Villeroy all about the movements of the cabal formed by Bagnolz' friends, and Chamillart's enemies who had rallied round Marshal de Villeroy.

I was alarmed when I heard of this very unusual conversation between Madame de Maintenon and Mademoiselle Choin. I guessed at once that Madame de Maintenon, who up to the present had never shown any deference to Monseigneur, nor had any relations whatever with the Choin, wished to take advantage of the latter's anger against Chamillart. I feared lest he might be struck by a sudden thunderbolt ; I went straight to him and told him what was going on. I found that he knew it already, and was in great perplexity. It was not the moment for reproaching him for his hasty and high-handed action in Bagnolz' affair, or his foolish obstinacy about Choin's regiment ; the only thing to be done was to find a remedy, and that without delay. I advised him to go to the King the very next day, and tell him that, while he felt highly honoured by his position as Minister, he cared little for it in the present state of his health ; but that gratitude and affection had given him a sincere attachment to his person, and for no consideration would he willingly give him a moment's uneasiness. It was painful to see a storm threatening him without, so far as he knew, any fault on his part ; but if his retention of office was, in the slightest degree, an embarrassment, and the King would prefer to have someone else in his place, he would willingly resign ; simply to please him and merit the continuance of his kindness and favour, which were dearer to him than fortune, and without which he could not live. I exhorted him to say no more than this ; but to say it forcibly and freely, looking the King straight in the face, and watching the slightest movement of his eyes, which would be very significant ; to express himself satisfied with any reply he

might make, even if it was merely polite ; above all, not to dwell too much on his resignation, and to avoid most carefully the mistake of trying to be asked to withdraw it. I added that it was not too late ; if he followed my advice I would guarantee that he would be well received, even if the King was in reality rather embarrassed ; that he would, as it were, have a fresh lease of his confidence ; and that, without saying another word, and simply leaving the King to deal with his adversaries, he would see the weapons drop from their hands.

I had no difficulty in persuading Chamillart that my advice was good ; but he was annoyed at finding himself reduced to such extremities, and consequently felt a certain inclination to do nothing and let himself be dismissed, which I had some difficulty in overcoming ; however, before I left him I had persuaded him. I advised him strongly to have his interview with the King in his private room, and not in Madame de Maintenon's apartments, for in that case she would be present. He agreed with me, and promised that it should be for next day. He embraced me, thanked me, and made an appointment to tell me the result of this assault. I was uneasy about it myself, though I hoped for the best. I was afraid the King might be already committed, and his manner might be cold and undecided ; in which case I feared lest Chamillart, in his annoyance, should make the blunder of saying too much and find himself taken at his word.

The fifteen or twenty hours which elapsed before our next meeting seemed very long ; but I was reassured directly I saw Chamillart. He was cheerful and light-hearted, and again embraced me. He told me that he had spoken exactly as I had advised ; the King had told him, with a smile, that he was very simple to think that he paid the smallest attention to all this talk ; Chamillart must continue to serve him well, as he had always done ; for his part, he would always feel affection for him and back him up, and he hoped his words would inspire him with fresh confidence. Chamillart thanked him warmly, and expressed his grateful and respectful devotion ; the King added a few more kind words, and they then proceeded to discuss their business. Chamillart returned looking years younger and as if a heavy load had been taken off his stomach. He told no one what had occurred except the Dukes de Chevreuse and de Beau-

villiers ; who had not thought him in such great danger, but were rejoiced at his success. I confess I was pleased with myself for what I had done. A few days later the rumours and intrigues ceased all of a sudden ; the King had apparently put a stop to them. But I thought it my duty to implore Chamillart to moderate his self-confidence, to feel his way cautiously, and to learn from this affair that he was not invulnerable ; for, as I told him, the persons he had to deal with would be all the more irritated against him by the failure of their design.

Owing to the resignation of Bagnolz a general change took place which brought Leblanc from the Intendancy of Auvergne to that of Ypres. I mention it because of all that occurred to him afterwards.

CHAPTER V

1708

Courcillon marries Pompadour's daughter—Lanjamet—The Prince de Léon—A queer elopement—Madame de Roquelaure demands the Prince's head—Scandalous amusement of the courtiers—My mother-in-law implicated—A country maid startled—The matter arranged peaceably—Cardinal de Bouillon visits me at La Ferté—His pride and absurdities—The King displeased at his long stay—Illness and death of Madame de Pontchartrain—Affected grief of the widower—He allows himself to be persuaded to return to his duties—Affliction of Madame de Saint-Simon—I pay a visit to La Vrillière at Châteauneuf—The Duke of Orleans in Spain—He finds nothing ready for his campaign—His vexation with Madame des Ursins—Proposes a scurrilous toast—Madame des Ursins and Madame de Maintenon vow vengeance—The Duke impenitent—He takes Tortosa—Minorca captured by the English—Death of Madame de Châtillon.

DANGEAU arranged a marriage between his only son and Pompadour's only daughter, a girl of thirteen, with a charming face and figure, which she still retains. Courcillon was twenty-one; I have already said enough about him and his parents. M. and Madame de Pompadour could not have found a more suitable match for their daughter from their point of view. Though they were rich, their property was much encumbered; and they had no dowry to give her. Far from being able to bring their affairs round, they were people who, though neither of them was stupid, let everything slip through their fingers; not only their fortune, but the advantages to be derived from their birth and good connections; yet that did not prevent them from being excessively proud. Pompadour, though he had a cultivated mind, was wrong-headed, and never did anything without blundering. He was a well-made man, with good features, but his face and bearing were most gloomy and depressing: he looked exactly like an undertaker, and he did not belie his looks; nothing could be duller or more tiresome than his conversation. He fell in love with the third daughter of M. and Madame de Navailles, who opposed the marriage;

but eventually yielded to his perseverance, the entreaties of the other daughters, and the wishes of the girl herself. After his marriage Pompadour retired from the Army and the Court, and went to live in obscurity. Although he and his wife were not tired of each other, they began to be bored by their position, and a suitable marriage for their daughter seemed to afford an opportunity of escaping from it. The Dowager-Duchess d'Elbœuf was fond of them because they treated her with infinite respect ; she was a great friend of Madame de Dangeau, and it was she who arranged this marriage. Dangeau was quite willing to accept the young lady without any ready money ; for he knew that his son could not have expected to make a marriage so brilliant from the point of view of birth if she had been wealthy as well ; moreover, he could afford to wait till she came into her inheritance. Madame de Maintenon was extremely fond of Madame de Dangeau (would to God that all the women of her circle had been of that stamp !) ; and she could hardly oppose the wishes of Madame de Pompadour, the daughter of the Madame de Navailles who had given her a home on her return from America. She favoured the marriage, and it came off accordingly. The bride's parents emerged from their obscurity, and at their advanced age we saw them spring up in the Court like mushrooms. Dangeau, with the consent of the King and Monseigneur, resigned his office as *menin* in favour of Pompadour ; and Madame de Dangeau resigned hers as Lady of the Palace in favour of her daughter-in-law, having been unable for some time to perform her functions owing to ill-health. So there were the Pompadours initiated into the inner circles of the Court, all of a sudden ; invited to Marly and Meudon, and sometimes to Madame de Maintenon's rooms. The wife, though formerly handsome, had always been disagreeable. She was a sort of *précieuse*, affected, and terribly given to scheming ; nevertheless, she was clever and always polite. They were continually with the Dangeaus, and lived with them in the closest union, admiring even the escapades of their son-in-law, who made fun of them without much attempt at concealment.

About the same time Lanjamet announced his marriage with the daughter of an attorney at Paris, whom he had kept for a long time and married secretly three or four years before. She had been handsome, with cleverness and

cunning enough for four devils, and as spiteful and wicked as fourteen. This Lanjamet was also clever, and not without courage ; he had served for a long time as Lieutenant in the Guards. He was one of those insects whom one is always surprised to find about a Court, and who are only tolerated there because of their insignificance. He was a very little man, with a huge nose like a parrot's beak, which took up the whole of his face. He chattered, laid down the law, and thrust himself into such houses as were open to everybody ; very few others would receive him. By some extraordinary chance he had served during a campaign as aide-de-camp to the King, who gave him a petty governorship in Brittany. He was by birth a Breton, but not a gentleman ; he was affronted in consequence, at a meeting of the Estates of Brittany. M. de la Trémouille, who presided over the assembly, told me the story. He was calling on the nobility for their votes ; a confused clamour arose demanding that all who had not the right to vote should leave the room ; and it is a right which belongs to the poorest and youngest gentleman in Brittany. M. de la Trémouille cast his eyes round the room, and said he saw no one there not entitled to vote. On this the voices called out, " Lanjamet ! Lanjamet ! We will not vote while he is in the room ! " whereupon Lanjamet went out without saying a word. It was only through this adventure that M. de la Trémouille found out that he was not a gentleman. He came back to the Court with undiminished impudence ; that is, to Versailles, for he was not on a footing to go to Marly or Meudon. Insignificant as he was, his marriage with the daughter of an attorney, of shady character, was a disgrace to him. Nevertheless, he introduced her to the house of the Grand Equerry, whose family she afterwards contrived to set by the ears ; after which she was turned out, as she was from nearly all the houses into which her husband had thrust her.

Louville, since his return from Spain, had given his attention solely to restoring his private affairs and building, though with prudence, a very agreeable house. About this time he married a daughter of Nointel, who was brother to the Duchess de Brissac and Madame Desmarets. He was fortunate enough to marry a good-looking, sensible, cheerful, and virtuous woman, who lived with him like an angel, though considerably younger than himself, and thought of

nothing but her duties and entertaining his friends. She was universally liked and respected.

The Prince de Léon, having lost all hope of seeing his actress again, and reduced to surrender by famine, not only consented but wished to marry. His parents, who had been terrified lest he should marry this woman, were no less anxious to see him settled. They cast their eyes on the eldest daughter of the Duke de Roquelaure, who would some day be extremely rich. As she was ugly, hump-backed, and not very young, a match such as the Prince de Léon, who would be a Duke and Peer, with a certain income of 50,000 crowns besides other property, was better than she could reasonably have expected. Both sides were agreed ; but on the eve of signing the marriage contract the engagement was suddenly broken off, owing to the Duchess de Roquelaure having insisted haughtily on the Duke de Rohan making a larger allowance to his son. The engaged couple were in despair ; the Prince de Léon suspected that his father meant to negotiate marriages for him without any real intention of concluding them, so as to avoid giving him anything ; the young lady feared lest her mother's avarice should spoil her chances of marriage, and leave her to grow mouldy in her convent. She was twenty-four years of age, very clever, of a bold, enterprising, and determined disposition. The Prince de Léon was twenty-eight; we had occasion to notice his character not long ago.

Mademoiselle de Roquelaure and her sisters were in the Convent of the Cross, situated in the Faubourg St. Antoine ; and the Prince de Léon had permission to see her there. As soon as he felt sure that the engagement would be broken off, he rushed to the convent and told Mademoiselle de Roquelaure. He acted the part of the despairing lover, and suggested to her that they should not let themselves become the victims of their parents' caprices ; he was ready to marry her, he said, if she would consent ; their parents, who had themselves arranged the marriage in the first instance, would have to make the best of it when it was once concluded ; in short, he persuaded her to run away with him, and made her believe that not a moment was to be lost. They arranged a plan by which she could receive messages from him, and he went off to make preparations for the elopement. M. de Léon knew that the Mother-Superior had instructions from

Madame de Roquelaure to allow Madame de la Vieuville to take her daughters out whenever she called for them ; he therefore got a carriage exactly like Madame de la Vieuville's, with her arms and liveries ; wrote a letter in imitation of her handwriting, and sent it with the carriage to the convent, at the time when he knew Madame de la Vieuville usually sent for the young ladies if she wished to take them out. Mademoiselle de Roquelaure, who had received notice beforehand, took the letter to the Mother-Superior, telling her that Madame de la Vieuville had sent for her, and asking if she had any message.

The Mother-Superior, quite unsuspecting, did not take the trouble to look at the letter ; and Mademoiselle de Roquelaure, with her governess, at once got into the carriage. When it reached the first corner the Prince de Léon opened the door and jumped in ; the coachman immediately whipped up his horses. The astonished governess began to scream, but the Prince promptly stuffed a handkerchief into her mouth and held it tight. In this way they soon arrived at Bruyères, a country house belonging to the Duke de Lorge, a great friend of M. de Léon's, who was waiting for them there, with the Count de Rieux, to act as witnesses. They had an inhibited vagabond priest with them ready to perform the marriage ceremony ; which he did on the spot, after saying Mass. My brother-in-law then conducted the newly married pair to their bed-chamber, where they were left alone for three hours ; after this they had a good dinner, and the bride and her distracted governess returned to the convent in the same carriage. Mademoiselle de Roquelaure went straight to the Mother-Superior and told her what had happened ; then, without taking the slightest notice of her cries, she quietly retired to her room and wrote to her mother.

The fury of Madame de Roquelaure may be easily imagined. She thought her friend Madame de la Vieuville had betrayed her, rushed off to her house, and overwhelmed her with reproaches. Madame de la Vieuville, in utter bewilderment, asked what was the matter ; but it was a long time before she could get an intelligible answer out of Madame de Roquelaure's sobs and hysterical passion. At last she made out what had happened, and was equally angry herself ; she protested her innocence, and brought her servants to witness that her carriage had not been out

the whole day. Both ladies were furious with the Prince de Léon and his accomplices ; Madame de Roquelaure the more so because, after the rupture of the engagement, he had quite won her heart by his respect and attentions, and they had vowed mutual friendship. She was also furious with her daughter, not only for what she had done, but on account of her cheerfulness and unembarrassed behaviour at Bruyères, and some songs with which she had enlivened the repast there.

The Duke and Duchess de Rohan, though not so much to be pitied, were also very angry. Their son, seeing that he was in a scrape, had recourse to his aunt, Madame de Soubise, to mollify the King ; for, though she was on bad terms with her brother, this affair could not be a matter of indifference to her. She told him to go to the Chancellor and ask his advice ; he arrived accordingly at Pontchartrain at five o'clock in the morning, the day following this fine wedding. The Chancellor was just dressing when the Prince de Léon arrived ; his counsel was to do all he could to soothe his father and Madame de Roquelaure, and in the meantime to keep well out of the way. While they were talking a message came from Madame de Roquelaure begging the Chancellor to go to her at once ; she had heard that the Prince de Léon was with him, and, not wishing to meet him, had stopped her carriage a couple of miles off. The Chancellor immediately rode to meet her, and found her still transported with fury. He got into her carriage ; she told him that she had not come to ask his advice, but to tell him, as a friend, what she intended to do, and, as the head of the law, to demand justice from him. He heard her out, and then attempted to reply ; but when she found that he was trying to reason with her she became still more angry, and went straight off to Marly, where she asked for a private audience of the King. She threw herself at his feet, and begged that justice might be done on the Prince de Léon. The King raised her in a gallant manner, as a person who had not always been indifferent to him, and tried to soothe her ; but, as she persisted in her outcries for justice, he asked her whether she was aware of the full extent of her demands, for they concerned nothing less than the head of the Prince de Léon. In spite of all he could say, she continued to reiterate her entreaties ; so at last he said that, since she insisted upon it, he promised

her that justice should take its full course. Thereupon he left her, and went back to his own room, looking very serious, and speaking to no one.

This interview took place in the King's small private room ; Madame de Maintenon had taken the King into it, and immediately shut the door. This aroused the curiosity of Monseigneur and the Princesses, who usually followed the King into it ; for it chanced that no one had seen Madame de Roquelaure enter. Their curiosity was succeeded by some uneasiness when the King came out looking so serious. Madame de Maintenon, however, told the Duke and Duchess of Burgundy what had occurred. The news immediately spread through the antechamber and saloon, and the kindness of heart natural to courtiers displayed itself at once in all its glory. Hardly a word of pity was bestowed on Madame de Roquelaure ; every one was so struck by the absurdity of the abduction of an ugly, hump-backed girl by such an unpleasant gallant that there was a general shout of laughter ; the noise was really scandalous. Madame de Maintenon laughed as much as anybody, but soon composed herself, and said it was hardly charitable to laugh like that ; but she said it in a tone not calculated to impose silence. She had her reasons for keeping on good terms with Madame de Roquelaure, though she had no reason to love her ; as for the Duke de Rohan and his son, she did not care a straw for them. However, as there were many fathers and mothers present, besides others who might become such, after the first outburst of laughter, reflection and self-interest brought everybody round to Madame de Roquelaure's side ; she was much pitied, and her anger considered very excusable.

Madame de Saint-Simon and I had remained at Paris, where, like every one else, we heard of the elopement which had taken place the day before ; but we were ignorant of M. de Lorge's share in it, or that the wedding had taken place at his house. On the morning of the second day I was suddenly aroused at five o'clock by my curtains being pulled aside, and saw Madame de Saint-Simon and her brother standing by my bedside. They briefly explained what was the matter ; a very clever man who looked after our affairs came in in his dressing-gown, and while they went off to consult him they made me get up and dress, and had the carriage got ready. I never saw a man in

such a fright as the Duke de Lorge ; he had confessed to Chamillart, and been referred by him to Doremieu, a lawyer, fashionable at that time, who had greatly alarmed him. On leaving him he had come straight to our house to induce us to go with him to Pontchartrain. It often happens that ridiculous incidents occur in the midst of the most serious affairs. He came and knocked with all his might at Madame de Saint-Simon's door. My daughter happened to be unwell ; her mother thought she must be taken suddenly worse, and, under the impression that it was I who knocked, she ran to open the door. The sight of her brother gave her another fright ; and she took refuge in her bed, her brother following her to tell her his trouble. She rang to have the shutters opened so that she might be able to see. On the very day before she had taken into her service a young girl from La Ferté, aged sixteen, who was sleeping in a small room adjoining the bedroom. M. de Lorge, anxious to tell his story, told her to make haste and go, and shut the door after her. The little creature, in great distress of mind, huddled on some clothes and ran upstairs to wake an old maid-servant who had procured her engagement. After much hesitation she managed to stammer out that she had just left a handsome young gentleman, all powdered and curled, by Madame de Saint-Simon's bedside, and that he had turned her out of the room. She was quite trembling with fright. They soon found out who the young gentleman was. We were told the story as we were setting out, and it made us laugh in spite of our anxiety.

The Chancellor told us about the visits he had received on the preceding day, and what had passed at them. He advised strongly that the priest and all witnesses of the ceremony should go into hiding, and that the signatures should be abstracted ; if this were done, with a resolute denial of everything, he thought the Duke de Lorge had nothing to fear. We then went on to L'Étang to see Chamillart ; whom we found much put out about this disagreeable affair, but not much alarmed. The King had ordered him to report everything connected with it to him without delay, and to allow no steps to be taken without his knowledge. Thence we returned to Paris, where we learnt that the priest and the valets had already escaped, and measures were being taken to destroy the register and the signatures.

Madame de Roquelaure had sent to inform the Duke

de Roquelaure, who was at Montpellier in Languedoc, of what had occurred, He was, if possible, more furious than his wife. But, after an immense amount of talk and noise, people began to understand that the King had no real intention of abandoning the daughter of Madame de Roquelaure to public dishonour, far less of sending the nephew of Madame de Soubise to the scaffold or forcing him into exile. After a time M. de Roquelaure's sister, the Duchess de Foix, persuaded him and his wife that it would be to their interest to make the best of it, and allow their daughter to marry the Prince de Léon. The odd thing was that it was much more difficult to make the Duke and Duchess of Rohan see matters in the same light; they both disliked their eldest son, and would not have been sorry to make the second son their heir in his place. At last the King sent for Madame de Rohan, and told her, with the greatest politeness, that he could not allow the affair to go any further; he trusted that she and her husband would give their consent to the marriage, but if they persisted in refusing, he said, he would exercise his royal authority, and have it celebrated in spite of them. He allowed the Prince de Léon to come and thank him, asking pardon for his crime at the same time; and finally, after so much trouble and ill-feeling, the marriage contract was signed by both families at the house of the Duchess de Roquelaure. The banns were published, and, by special permission of Cardinal de Noailles, the wedding took place very privately in the chapel of the convent. Since her elopement Mademoiselle de Roquelaure had been closely guarded by five or six nuns, who relieved each other regularly. The newly married pair expiated their folly by cruel poverty, which lasted nearly all their lives; for they hardly survived their parents. They left several children.

Cardinal de Bouillon had been engaged for a long time in disputes with the monks of Cluny; he had failed entirely in making them acknowledge his authority, and the personal insults which he received from them made his life there intolerable. He obtained leave to spend some time at Rouen, but only on condition that he should not come within thirty leagues of Paris or the Court. He asked several persons whose houses lay on his route to give him hospitality, in order to avoid the wretched inns on a by-road; but he had the mortification of receiving refusals from

nearly all—among others, from La Vrillière, who thought it would be bad policy to entertain an exile in such deep disgrace with the King. He asked me to take him in at La Ferté, and I thought I ought not to be so scrupulous. Madame de Saint-Simon was a near relation of the Bouillon family; they had always been on intimate terms with Marshal de Lorge, and they had taken an active part on my behalf during my lawsuit with the Duke de Brissac. These considerations induced me to treat him differently, and he stayed with me some days. The Bouillons were very grateful.

The Cardinal then went on to Rouen, where he was at first received with much attention and respect. But he spoilt everything by his extreme vanity. He kept a good table, to which he asked a great number of people; but he himself always dined alone, on the plea of ill-health. After a time people saw that his real reason was pride; his house became a desert, and every one took offence at pretensions unknown even to the Princes of the Blood. His undignified and querulous complaints did not raise him in the public estimation. His life had become a burden to him, and he could not conceal his feelings. During his sojourn at Rouen he lost another of his lawsuits against the monks of Cluny, which put the finishing touch to his rage and mortification; and before long he made himself as much despised in Normandy as he already was in Burgundy. At last he was ordered to return, and he again asked me to allow him to spend some days at La Ferté; in order, as he said, to undergo some medical treatment amid greater quiet than he could obtain at Rouen. This time I sent no one to La Ferté to receive him, for I did not think it necessary to go beyond the strict duties of hospitality with an exile of his sort. He was charmed with the park, and walked much in it; but he was very careful about his health, and always came in before the dew began to fall; he slept in my own room, and dined in the ante-chamber, because they were the only rooms which did not look out on to the water. Sometimes he said Mass in the parish church, and as he came out he would say to the bystanders: "Note well what you see—a Cardinal-Prince, Doyen of the Sacred College, next in rank to the Pope himself, who has just said Mass in your church: you have never seen such a sight before, and you will never see it again

when I am gone !” Even the common people laughed at his deplorable vanity.

He paid a visit to La Trappe, where he entertained the Abbot and M. de Saint-Louis with bitter lamentations over his wretched situation, which they did not consider very edifying, though they could not help feeling a certain pity for him. M. de Saint-Louis, whom he knew well, tried in vain to bring him to a better frame of mind, and began speaking about death, and what a man must feel when he sees it approaching, urging the necessity of meditating beforehand on that awful moment. “Do not talk about death, M. de Saint-Louis !” cried the Cardinal. “Let us have no mention of death. I will not die !” I mention these trifles to show the real character of this personage, who rose so rapidly and to such a height through the favour of Louis XIV ; who made so much stir in the world by his pride and ambition, and who showed himself so petty and contemptible after his fall. We shall see him universally despised, even at Rome, whither he retired to live in melancholy banishment, and to die with the same overweening pride as he had shown throughout his life.

His stay at La Ferté lasted more than six weeks. While there, he was visited by several men of business, and by the Abbé de Choisy, an old friend of his, who afterwards went as a priest to Siam and wrote an agreeable account of his travels and some curious fragmentary memoirs. The Cardinal had hopes of inducing the Bishop of Chartres to take his part with the King, in spite of all that had passed in the affair of the Archbishop of Cambrai. He sent the Abbé de Choisy to Chartres to try and get the Bishop to visit him, or at any rate to meet him somewhere, ostensibly by chance ; but the Bishop refused. The Abbé then tried to induce the Bishop to use his influence with the King to have the last decision of the law-courts in favour of the monks of Cluny reconsidered ; but all his clever diplomacy was fruitless ; he returned to La Ferté with many complimentary messages from the Bishop to the Cardinal, but an absolute refusal to comply with any of his requests. It is impossible to describe the fury of the Cardinal on receiving this message, or the language which he used against the Bishop—a man so much his inferior in station, before whom he had humbled himself in vain ; against the King, the Ministers, and his own friends. He saw that his disgrace

was intended to be permanent, and henceforth lost all hope of any mitigation of his exile. I have reason to believe that at this time he began to make preparations for the step which he took nearly two years afterwards. I heard all these details from the parish priest of La Ferté, a clever and learned man, with whom the Cardinal had become so familiar during his walks that he sometimes asked him to share his meals—he, who had considered it beneath his dignity to dine with the most distinguished society of Rouen !

This period of quiet and solitude in an agreeable place was pleasant to the Cardinal, and he wished to remain at La Ferté till the Court left for Fontainebleau. This prolonged visit, however, which I had not anticipated, began to make me uneasy ; I was afraid lest the King should be displeased. I spoke to the Chancellor and M. de Beauvilliers about it, and made them understand that, though I had no sort of intercourse with the Cardinal, I could not very well turn him out of my house. It was fortunate that I took this precaution. A few days later the subject of the Cardinal's lawsuits with the monks of Cluny was mentioned in the Council ; whereupon the King remarked that he was making a very long stay at La Ferté, and that, strictly speaking, he ought not to be allowed to remain there, for he was forbidden to come within thirty leagues of the Court, and it is only twenty from Versailles to La Ferté. The Chancellor, and, after him, the Duke de Beauvilliers, took the opportunity of putting in a word for me ; and the King appeared to receive it favourably. At last the Court moved to Fontainebleau, and the Cardinal at once left La Ferté. As he could no longer bear the neighbourhood of Cluny, he obtained permission to retire to a country house near Lyons.

The King arrived at Fontainebleau on the 19th of June. Madame de Saint-Simon and I were detained at Paris by the condition of Madame de Pontchartrain, who was dying ; she could see hardly any one except Madame de Saint-Simon, with whom she had lived like a sister, and who was her only comfort. This melancholy event had been long foreseen ; it was the result of too frequent confinements, and of some want of care in the early stages of her illness. Pontchartrain's strange temper had been a source of continued vexation to her, which she bore with infinite gentleness and patience ; at last her health gave way completely

under it. Pontchartrain quite realised what a loss she would be to him ; more than a year before he had confided to me that if this misfortune occurred, as he foresaw it would, he intended to resign his office at once, and retire for a time to some small rooms which his father had in the institution of the Oratory. For the sake of his children I did my best to dissuade him from so rash a design. He was a very repulsive person, and nobody knew it better than I did, because I saw him oftener and more intimately than most people ; yet I confess that I was taken in, and pitied him. Before long I began to perceive that his resolve did not arise from grief alone ; he was afraid he would not be able to retain his office when deprived of the consideration extended to him for his wife's sake. I was the more uneasy, for I thought a determination caused by a mixture of grief and pride would be still more difficult to overcome. I took Madame de Saint-Simon into my confidence, to obtain the benefit of her sound judgement, and she was quite of my opinion. While I was at La Ferté at Christmas-time, looking after my improvements and plantations, news came that Madame de Pontchartrain was worse ; I instantly left the pleasant party there, and rushed off to Paris to be in time to stop Pontchartrain's resignation.

The illness lasted six months longer, which gave time for Pontchartrain to mention his designs to Father de la Tour, the General of the Oratory, and to the Abbé de Maulévrier, a great friend of the Jesuits and of the Archbishop of Cambrai. The latter dissuaded him from retiring to the Oratory for fear of offending the Jesuits ; Father de la Tour was also afraid of their ill-will ; he advised him to go to Pontchartrain as soon as his misfortune happened, and to put off his resignation for a few weeks. Madame de Pontchartrain died at last, on the 23rd of June ; we had hardly stirred from that melancholy house for nearly two months. Madame de Saint-Simon, notwithstanding her sincere piety, was in great affliction, and could not be left alone. I wished to stay with her, but she knew what Pontchartrain had threatened, and for the sake of his children, or rather of her friend's children, she begged me to do all I could to prevent his committing such an act of folly. I left her, therefore, to the care of the Maréchale de Lorge, Madame de Lausun, and my mother ; and, together with Father de la Tour, accompanied the widower

to Pontchartrain. His three sisters-in-law arrived there the same day, and before long a party of relations and connections had assembled there.

The Chancellor had been obliged to accompany the Court to Fontainebleau, and was there when Madame de Pontchartrain died. He wrote me a most urgent letter, begging me to persuade his son to come to Fontainebleau ; and especially to send away the sisters-in-law and the rest of the company. He insisted on this last point with what I thought exaggerated emphasis. But the fact was that the affairs of Pontchartrain's department, although the Chancellor did his son's work as well as he could, were suffering from his absence and the want of his signature to documents ; the King, the last man in the world to sympathise with the affliction of others, was beginning to be angry ; in the eyes of the Court the assembly at Pontchartrain, though consisting entirely of relations and intimate friends, appeared to be a sort of pleasure-party, very unsuitable at such a time ; and it was the subject of many sneering and malignant comments. I had left Pontchartrain for a few days, to see Madame de Saint-Simon ; but, on receipt of the Chancellor's letter, I returned thither at once. I found that the Abbé de Maulévrier had already conveyed the Chancellor's wishes to his son ; and, as he was a tactless busybody, he had contrived to irritate him and his three sisters-in-law. These ladies were ignorant of Pontchartrain's designs ; they were doing all they could to please him ; they were not sorry, perhaps, to get him to themselves and set him against his father, so as to have opportunities of getting more money out of him than they did already. They complained bitterly to him of the scandalous treatment which they had to put up with for his sake. Pontchartrain, always jealous of his independence, broke out into fury, and declared flatly that they should not be sent away ; he had little difficulty in overcoming the scruples of persons who were only too anxious to stay.

When I arrived I was immediately attacked by Madame de Roucy, who gave me a good scolding. I then addressed myself to Madame de Blansac, as the one most open to reason ; though, with all her apparent gentleness, she was the cleverest and falsest of the three, and the most self-seeking. I agreed with all they said about the Abbé de Maulévrier, but I explained to them that the Chancellor

was only anxious to separate them from his son in order to get him back to the Court ; in short, I managed to appease them, and their husbands too. Before long, Father de la Tour and I began to suspect that Pontchartrain's outbursts of grief, his threats and fury against his father, were not quite genuine ; even his sisters-in-law thought his tears, cries, and fainting-fits rather unnatural, and confided their suspicions to us. The very servants talked in the same way. I wrote to the Chancellor and told him frankly what I thought about it.

A few days later two carriages were seen driving up to the house, and, to the astonishment of everybody but myself (for I was in the secret), the Chancellor's wife made her appearance. If a bomb-shell had fallen among them the three sisters-in-law could not have been more startled ; they were on the point of running away to hide themselves. The Chancelière greeted them with the greatest politeness ; she said she had not come to turn anybody out, nor to tease her son to go to Fontainebleau, but merely to keep him company so long as he stayed at Pontchartrain. In reality, she meant to tire them out by her presence and her compliments ; and so put an end to a visit which had already been absurdly prolonged. She soon succeeded in her design. The sisters-in-law, either to make their peace with the Chancellor and his wife, or to relieve their own boredom, were the first to urge their brother-in-law to return. He gave way, on condition that his father would receive him kindly, and that he should be allowed to live privately at Court, where he declared that he would remain only one year. He would have been very sorry if he had been taken at his word. His conduct after he returned, and his absurd affectation of grief, finally unmasked him, and brought him into general contempt, to the great vexation of the Chancellor and his wife. Madame de Saint-Simon's sorrow was more sincere and more lasting ; she was with great difficulty persuaded to go back to her accustomed life at Court. I was the more anxious that she should do so because the King did not approve of people absenting themselves on account of private griefs ; and he had already shown displeasure at Madame de Saint-Simon's excusing herself from some court festivity to which he had invited her during the last days of Madame de Pontchartrain's illness. All these details will no doubt appear

tiresome, but it will be seen later on that I have a reason for mentioning them.

All this time, busily occupied as I was, I took care to keep myself well informed concerning everything that occurred. I was in the intimate confidence of the Duke of Orleans and his friends ; and it happened that I was the only person in a position to tell him all that was going on at Court. I used to write to him in cipher, but only by his own couriers when they started on their return journeys ; now and then I sent him a letter of no importance, not in cipher, by the post or by the court couriers, to satisfy official curiosity. I had fallen rather into arrears with my correspondence ; but I was so worn out by the life I had been leading of late that I was glad to have a change of scene. La Vrillière asked me to go with him to Châteauneuf, and I accepted. There I shut myself up for a whole day, composing a long letter in cipher to the Duke of Orleans, which I sent by a sure hand to the post office at Orleans, so that it might escape being opened. Afterwards I went to stay with Cheverny and his wife at their beautiful house, and saw Chambord, which is close by—a place of which I had heard much, but which I do not covet. The Bishop of Blois, who was staying at Cheverny, also took me to see the *château* of Blois ; and Menars, where the sight of the beautiful terraces gave me much pleasure. After having been in a state of eclipse for ten or twelve days, I returned to Fontainebleau.

The Duke of Orleans had to make a longer stay at Madrid than he had intended. Nothing was ready for his campaign ; there had been gross neglect ; he had to remain on the spot to supply what was wanting, and it was by no means an easy task ; this was what prolonged his sojourn there. But ill-natured persons took the opportunity to spread a report that he was in love with the Queen of Spain. M. le Duc, who was enraged at his own enforced idleness, and jealous of the growing reputation of the Duke of Orleans, and Madame la Duchesse, who hated him the more because she had formerly been too intimate with him, were the chief disseminators of this rumour ; it spread rapidly from the town to the provinces, and even to foreign countries ; but in Spain it was never so much as mentioned, because there was not a vestige of foundation for it. The Duke of Orleans was engaged there by much more serious affairs ; and would

to God that he had taken the hindrances which he found less to heart ! or, at any rate, that his vexation had not caused him to lose control over his tongue ! One evening, after working hard all day, as he always did, at the preparations for his campaign, he sat down to supper with some French and Spanish noblemen on his staff. His mind was full of his embarrassments, and his anger with Madame des Ursins ; who, though she practically governed Spain, had not given a moment's thought to what was necessary for enabling the army to march. The supper became lively, rather too much so ; the Duke of Orleans, rather tipsy, and his mind still running on his disappointments, raised his glass, and, looking at the company (I apologise for using such plain language, but the word cannot be disguised) : "Gentlemen," said he, "I give you a toast : the —— Captain and the —— Lieutenant !" The joke tickled the fancy of the guests ; nobody, indeed, not even the Prince himself, ventured to explain it ; but the impulse to laugh was too strong for their caution. The toast was duly honoured, though no one actually repeated the words.

It caused a terrible scandal. Within half an hour it came to the ears of Madame des Ursins. She could not help seeing that she was the Lieutenant and Madame de Maintenon the Captain : and indeed, from all I have said about them, it will be seen that the toast could not possibly be understood in any other sense. She went into a fury of passion, and immediately reported the occurrence to Madame de Maintenon, quoting the very words. Madame de Maintenon was equally furious. *Inde iræ*. Never did they forgive the Duke of Orleans ; and we shall see how nearly they brought him to ruin. Up to that time Madame de Maintenon had neither liked nor disliked him, while Madame des Ursins had done all she could to please him. That was what stung her most ; to see that, in spite of all her attentions, her neglect of the public service had provoked him to this cruel jest, which gave an ineffaceable touch of ridicule to her influence. From that moment they vowed the destruction of the Prince, and he may be said to have escaped death by a hair's-breadth. He did escape it, it is true ; but during the rest of the King's life-time (and even in his dying acts) he had reason to feel what a cruel and implacable enemy he had made for himself in Madame de Maintenon. He soon perceived the changed

disposition of Madame des Ursins towards him ; henceforth she gave him no assistance in public affairs, and would not have been sorry to see a disaster occur, if he could be made responsible for it. There are things which cannot be smoothed over, and it must be confessed that this terrible jest was one of them. The Duke of Orleans never attempted to do so ; he went on his way as usual. I do not even know that he ever regretted what he had said, though he had good reason to do so ; he often made me angry afterwards by laughing with all his heart when he mentioned the subject. I perceived how serious the consequences might be for him ; but the worst of it was that, even while I was scolding him, I could not help laughing myself : he had hit off the mischievous absurdity of petticoat government on both sides of the Pyrenees so acutely and so funnily, in half a dozen words.

At last the Duke of Orleans managed to begin the campaign, though he never had more than a fortnight's supplies in hand for his army. On the 12th of June he invested Tortosa, a strong place with a numerous garrison. Two bridges were thrown over the Ebro ; but one of them gave way. There was a great scarcity of boats, ropes, and planks ; and it was only by dint of great personal exertions on the part of the Duke of Orleans that it was restored. He also had to take charge personally of the artillery and engineers, who were very incompetent, and gave much trouble. At last, on the night of the 9th of July, a lodgement was made in the covered way, and next day the garrison surrendered. During the rest of the campaign the Duke of Orleans, though with the less numerous army, forced Staremberg to retreat, and kept pushing him farther and farther back. But it was written that each successive year should bring fresh losses to Spain ; like a giant tree, decayed by the lapse of centuries, it was to lose, one by one, its noblest branches ; the inhabitants of Sardinia, driven to despair by the exactions of their Viceroy, rose against him and surrendered the island to the Archduke. But this was not the most serious loss of the year. In October Sir J. Leake appeared with a fleet before Minorca ; Port Mahon fell after a slight resistance, and the island submitted to the Archduke. This acquisition, combined with Gibraltar, enabled the English to dominate the Mediterranean, to winter there with their fleets, and to blockade all the eastern ports of Spain.

I must now go back a little, and turn to Flanders. I may mention, however, before doing so, that the Duchess de Châtillon died about this time. She was the Mademoiselle de Royan, niece to the Princess des Ursins, of whom I had occasion to speak in connection with the negotiations for my marriage. She had become extremely fat, and the King had asked her not to come to Court when the Duchess of Burgundy was *enceinte*. While in a convent, before she went to live with her aunt, she had been in the habit of mimicking one of the nuns, who had a sort of twitch of the face. She acquired it herself, and it became so bad that every few minutes her face was contorted by a frightful spasm ; but she herself was quite unaware of it.

CHAPTER VI

1708

An inauspicious day chosen for the Duke of Burgundy's departure—He passes by Cambrai—Affectionate meeting with the Archbishop—The King of England joins the army—Vendôme's sloth—He misses a favourable opportunity—Marlborough steals three marches on him—Battle of Oudenarde—Confusion and disorder—Vendôme's insolence to the Duke of Burgundy—The Vidame d'Amiens and Nangis save the fragments of the army—The Duke of Burgundy retires to Lawendeghem—Unsatisfactory despatches received from him and Vendôme—Biron returns as a prisoner on parole—His report of the hostile Generals—Marlborough expresses deep interest in the Chevalier de St. Georges—Prince Eugène and the Swiss troops—The cabal of Meudon—Its objects—Endeavours to throw discredit on the Duke of Burgundy—Alberoni's artful letter—Exposure of its lies—Scurrilous lampoons against the Duke of Burgundy—It becomes dangerous to say a word in his favour—The Duke de Beauvilliers admits his mistake.

THE King was weak enough to dislike making a start on a Friday himself, but he was not so particular where his grandson was concerned : he fixed his departure for Friday the 14th of May. One would have thought that, to a superstitious person, the anniversary of the assassination of Henry IV and of the death of Louis XIII would not seem a lucky day for France, or for the direct descendants of those Kings. But Louis XIV never took into account any King of France except himself ; on this occasion, however, he must have noticed that his Court, with all its servility, did not carry adulation quite to this point. According to the usual custom, the King's Mass on that day was a Requiem ; everybody was struck by it, and it cast quite a gloom over the young Prince's departure ; people talked of it openly. I did not witness the departure myself ; I was away at St. Denis, attending the anniversary service of the Sovereign¹ to whom I owe my whole fortune ; my father set me the example of looking upon this attendance as a duty to which everything else must

¹ Louis XIII.

give way ; and I have not missed it on a single occasion. It is true that, during my whole life, I have never seen any one else there ; I cannot get over this scandalous forgetfulness of that great monarch by so many families whom he loaded with favours ; and of whom many would have remained in obscurity but for him.

The Duke of Burgundy passed through Cambrai, with the same restrictions as on the former occasion ; but he stopped there to dine. It is true that it was at the post-house, where the Archbishop attended in common with everybody who happened to be at Cambrai. This public interview excited much curiosity. The young Prince tenderly embraced his tutor more than once, and told him, in an audible voice, that he should never forget how much he owed to him. He spoke to hardly any one else, and the affectionate looks which he cast on the Archbishop expressed all that the King had forbidden him to put into words. In spite of the Archbishop's disgrace, his Court became more numerous from that time forth ; and the most distinguished persons chose the route by Cambrai under one pretext or another, eager to merit his present favour and future patronage.

The Duke of Berry left on the 15th and joined his brother at Valenciennes without passing through Cambrai. The King of England arrived there soon afterwards, and remained throughout the campaign in such strict *incognito* that it was really hardly decent. Till the arrival of his own equipages he dined at the Duke of Burgundy's table ; afterwards he had a table of his own for sixteen persons, to which he invited people, and he did the honours very graciously ; he also accepted invitations to dinner from general officers. Although merely a volunteer, he chose to put himself at the head of the troops of his own nation, to their great delight. Even the English in the hostile army were pleased at his doing so, and expressed their satisfaction openly.

The Duke of Burgundy's army consisted of 206 squadrons, and 56 brigades of infantry, besides the King's household troops, the Gendarmerie, Carabiniers, and the regiment of Guards. The troops were full of zeal, and the army well supplied with everything. Nothing remained but to set it in motion ; but M. de Vendôme, who easily took root in a place where he found himself comfortable, was in no

hurry to do so. All the other Generals were anxious to move, but Vendôme insisted on having his own way. The high-handed manner in which he asserted his authority alarmed Puységur, who foresaw the probable consequences ; and he wrote a long letter on the subject to M. de Beauvilliers. The latter confided his uneasiness to me ; I reminded him of our conversation at Marly, but he was still unwilling to believe that I was right in my forebodings.

Prince Eugène crossed the Moselle on the 30th of June, sent his infantry down the Rhine from Coblenz in boats, and marched on Maestricht. A plot had been formed to surrender the town of Luxembourg to him ; but it was discovered in time, and the ringleaders were hanged. In the meantime Bergheyck was taking measures to derive some little profit from the plan for a general rising in the Spanish Netherlands, which had been so well concerted, and would in all probability have been completely successful, but for the failure of the Scotch expedition. He had a secret understanding with the leading burghers of Ghent and Bruges, and both towns fell into our hands without a shot being fired ; The Dukes of Burgundy and Berry, with the Chevalier de St. Georges, made a pompous entry into Ghent, and were magnificently entertained at the Hôtel-de-Ville. There were frantic rejoicings at Fontainebleau over this good news ; for my own part, though delighted at this successful opening of the campaign, I feared lest our rejoicings should turn out to be premature ; and I could not help confiding my misgivings by letter to the Duke of Orleans. Prince Eugène's march into Flanders from the Moselle caused the Elector of Bavaria to send Berwick to that country with a detachment of 24 battalions and 65 squadrons.

The best way to profit by our easy success at Ghent and Bruges appeared to be to cross the Scheldt and burn Oudenarde, which would have the effect of cutting off the enemy's supplies, while our army, posted in an impregnable camp, could be easily supplied by water carriage. M. de Vendôme admitted this, but to carry out the project it was necessary to move and occupy this camp, and his personal indolence made him very unwilling to stir ; he was comfortable where he was, and said the movement was one which could be executed at any time. The Duke of Burgundy urged him to march at once, and not run the risk of being anticipated

by the enemy ; he was backed up by the opinion of the whole army, but could make no impression on Vendôme's sloth and self-confidence.

Marlborough saw clearly that this movement was the best Vendôme could make, and that it would not be easy to prevent it. He had to make a long, circuitous march of twenty-five leagues ; while Vendôme, moving by the chord of the arc, had not more than six leagues to cover, at the outside. Marlborough put his army in movement with such skill and celerity that he stole three forced marches on Vendôme before the latter had the slightest suspicion of his manœuvre, although the two armies were not very far apart. According to his usual custom, he refused to believe the first reports that came in ; when convinced that they were true he declared that there was still plenty of time, and that he would get in front of the enemy by marching next morning. The Duke of Burgundy, supported by all who dared to express their opinions, urged him to march that evening ; but Vendôme would not hear of it. His carelessness was carried so far that no bridges had been thrown over a small river which had to be crossed near the camp ; it was announced that they should be got ready by working all night. Biron (now a Duke and Peer, and Marshal of France) was in command of the reserve some way from the camp, and in touch with another detached corps at a still greater distance. He received orders that evening to call in this detachment and march to the Scheldt, at the place where the army was to cross next day. Accustomed as he was to M. de Vendôme's ways, he was much surprised to find the bridges still unfinished, and to see the tents still standing in the main camp when he passed it in the morning. He crossed the Scheldt as well as he could, and took up a position on the heights beyond. It was about two in the afternoon of Wednesday, the 11th of July, when he came in sight of the whole of the enemy's army ; the rear of their columns near Oudenarde, and their front wheeling round as if to attack him. He immediately sent an aide-de-camp to Vendôme and the Princes to report and ask for orders. Three messengers, however, had to be despatched before Vendôme would believe the news ; at last he sent orders to Biron to attack the enemy at once, promising him immediate support. In the meantime Biron had posted his troops as well as he could in a very

broken position, occupying a village, and lining the hedges and the borders of a deep ravine. He saw that an attack in face of the overwhelming numbers of the enemy was hopeless; nevertheless, he felt inclined to carry out his orders, for he knew that, if he disobeyed, Vendôme would throw on him the whole blame of any disaster. Puysegur strongly advised him not to attack; while they were discussing the matter, Marshal de Mattignon came up and settled the question by positively forbidding him to do so; saying he would take the responsibility on himself.

Heavy firing was now heard on the left, beyond the village; Biron hastened to the spot, and found an infantry combat already begun. He sent up such reinforcements as he could, while farther still to the left the enemy were gaining ground. They were checked by the ravine, which gave M. de Vendôme time to arrive. The troops he brought up were out of breath; they took position behind the hedges, still in columns as they had arrived; so that only the heads of these columns could fire on the enemy, who were extending in line. Other troops kept coming up on our side; but they also were out of breath, and found themselves roughly charged as soon as they arrived, for the enemy took advantage of the gaps between our columns. Some of them gave way and threw the battalions next them into disorder; soon all was confusion; the cavalry and household troops found themselves mixed up with the infantry, and it was no longer possible to distinguish the different corps. The enemy, in the meantime, had filled up the ravine in places with fascines.

While all this was taking place the enemy made a flank attack on our right wing, where the two Princes were posted. Our troops on this side, seeing themselves attacked in flank by superior numbers, broke at once, and fled with such precipitation that the Princes were carried away by the crowd of fugitives till they reached the left wing, where the fight was still raging. There they displayed great coolness, showing themselves to the troops in the most exposed places, rallying and encouraging them, and asking advice from the most experienced officers. The advance of the enemy on the right was hindered by broken ground, which gave time to the troops in our right wing to reform, and offer some resistance, in spite of the shaking (to put it mildly) which they had received. But this effort did not last long. Our

troops were worn out and discouraged, and there was general confusion. The household cavalry escaped being surrounded only by the mistake of an officer of the enemy, who rode up with an order to the red regiments, thinking they were English. Seeing that he was about to share their peril he warned them in time, and the household troops retired hastily in some disorder. The general confusion increased every moment ; cavalry, infantry, and dragoons were all mixed up together ; not a battalion nor a squadron remained unbroken ; all was confusion and disorder.

Night was coming on ; part of our army had been driven back for a considerable distance, part of it had not yet arrived on the scene. In this distressing situation the Princes went to Vendôme for advice. In his fury at the consequences of his own bad calculations he was treating everybody roughly. As soon as the Duke of Burgundy attempted to speak he stopped him angrily, telling him in an imperious manner before all the bystanders “ to remember that he had only joined the army on condition of obeying his orders.” This outrageous speech, pronounced at a moment when every one was feeling cruelly the results of too much deference to Vendôme’s sloth and obstinacy, made the bystanders tremble with indignation. The young Prince sought to gain a victory over himself, more difficult than that which the enemy was just gaining over his army ; he saw he had no choice between taking the most extreme measures against Vendôme and keeping complete silence ; he was sufficiently master of himself not to say a single word. Vendôme then began a long harangue, declaring that the battle was not yet lost ; he said a great part of the army had not been engaged ; he intended to remain where he was for the night and renew the fight next day. Everybody listened in silence to a man who had just shown, by his astounding speech to the heir-apparent to the Crown, how little he could bear contradiction. At last the Count d’Évreux, Vendôme’s first cousin and protégé, broke the silence by some words of approval ; as his rank was only that of *maréchal-de-camp*, it caused some surprise that he should venture to express an opinion.

In the meantime reports came in from all quarters showing that the disaster was complete. Vendôme saw that further resistance was impossible, and, furious with anger, cried, “ Well, gentlemen, I see what you all want ; we must retreat.

As for you, sir," he continued, turning to the Duke of Burgundy, "you have been wishing for it for a long time!" Those were his very words; and they were pronounced in such a fashion that none of his hearers could mistake his meaning. The Duke of Burgundy, as before, kept his temper and made no reply, while the bystanders remained in stupefied silence. Puysegur broke it first by asking how the retreat was to be conducted. Vendôme, angry and embarrassed, made no answer for some time; at last he said briefly that the army would fall back on Ghent, without giving any further orders.

The day had been very fatiguing; the proposed retreat was long and hazardous; the only remaining hope was in the army which the Duke of Berwick was bringing from the Moselle. Puysegur proposed that the Princes' carriages should be brought up, so that they might travel more at their ease to Bruges, to meet this force on its arrival. An escort of 500 cavalry was ordered to go with them; but then Vendôme interfered, saying that such a proposal was discreditable; the carriages were therefore countermanded, and the escort was afterwards used to collect stragglers. Then this little Council of War broke up; the Princes, with a small suite, rode off towards Ghent; Vendôme gave no further orders, and appeared not to trouble himself about anything; the Generals went to their respective divisions, or rather to such broken remains of them as they could find, and word was passed round that the army was to retire on Ghent. In the meantime our right wing, including the household troops, found its retreat entirely cut off. A hasty council was held; after some deliberation the Vidame d'Amiens, who, as a newly promoted *maréchal-de-camp*, had hitherto said nothing, told the other officers that, while they were wasting time in talk, they were being surrounded. Then, turning to the light horse of the Guard, "Follow me," he cried, like a worthy brother and successor of the Duke de Montfort; and, putting himself at their head, he broke through the enemy's cavalry. He then charged a line of infantry, which gave him their fire, but opened to let him pass. The household troops and other regiments followed; and, after marching all night, made good their retreat to Ghent. The retreat was conducted throughout by the Vidame, who thus saved a considerable portion of the army by his courage and presence of mind. The broken remains

of the other wing retreated as well as they could ; but the confusion was so great that the Chevalier du Rosel, who had not received the order to retire, found himself next morning with 100 squadrons, which were quite isolated. He saw it was impossible to remain where he was ; so that, although there was little prospect of retreating in safety, he put his force in motion at once. Nangis, also a newly promoted *maréchal-de-camp*, managed to collect a few hundred stragglers, with whom he formed a rear-guard for Rosel's force ; and, though they had to fight their way for several hours, they eventually made good their retreat.

The Duke of Burgundy passed through Ghent without stopping, and continued his march to Lawendeghem, where he formed a camp behind the Bruges canal, to await the arrival of Berwick. M. de Vendôme arrived at Ghent between seven and eight o'clock in the morning ; without seeking to obtain any information, he went to bed, and remained there for more than thirty hours, to rest from his fatigues. He learnt from his people that the army was at Lawendeghem, three leagues away ; but he remained at Ghent for several days without troubling himself in the least about military affairs. A few days later the Count de la Mothe took the fort of Plassendal, an important post which commands the water communication ; the garrison were put to the sword. On the other hand, the enemy took possession of our lines and camp at Warwick, occupied only by small detachments of infantry.

Great pains were taken to conceal our losses in this battle¹ ; they were very heavy in killed and wounded ; 4,000 men and 700 officers were taken prisoners at Oudenarde, besides a great many in the retreat, and the dispersion of our army was prodigious. As soon as the Duke of Burgundy arrived at Lawendeghem he wrote a short letter to the King, referring him for details of the battle to the Duke de Vendôme. At the same time he wrote to the Duchess of Burgundy that this unfortunate event was caused by the obstinacy and negligence of Vendôme in delaying his march two days longer than he ought to have done, contrary to his own wishes ; another experience like this, he said, would make him give up campaigning, unless prevented by orders to which he

¹ The French loss amounted to over 6,000 killed and wounded, and 9,000 prisoners. The Allies lost about 3,000 men. The British troops were not much engaged in this battle.

owed a blind obedience. Vendôme's tactics in the attack, during the battle, and in the retreat were equally incomprehensible ; and he was so vexed about the affair that he could say no more. The courier who carried these letters passed through Ghent, and brought a very short one from Vendôme, in which he tried to make out that it had been a drawn battle. Shortly afterwards he sent another very brief despatch to the King, saying that he would have beaten the enemy if he had been properly supported ; adding that, if the Council of War had not insisted on a retreat, contrary to his own opinion, he would certainly have beaten them next day ; for details he, again, referred to the Duke of Burgundy. This shifting of responsibility from one to the other sharpened public curiosity to the highest degree, and was the beginning of the obscurity which it was Vendôme's interest to throw over the disaster. A third courier brought the King a long despatch in the Duke of Burgundy's own handwriting, and another very short one from Vendôme, who still excused himself from giving details under various pretexts ; he also brought many letters for private persons, all of which the King took and read, one in particular three times over. Few of these letters were delivered, and those few had all been opened. This courier arrived after the King's supper, so that the ladies who had followed their Princesses were eye-witnesses of the opening of the letters. The King made hardly any remarks on their contents ; because at Fontainebleau there is only one private room, and all these ladies assemble in it. The Duchess of Burgundy had a letter from her husband, and a short one from the Duke of Berry, in which he said that M. de Vendôme was very unlucky and was blamed by the whole army. When she returned to her own rooms she could not refrain from remarking that the Duke of Burgundy seemed to have some very silly people about him. That was all she said.

Biron, who had been taken prisoner, was released on parole for a short time on condition of not passing by our army ; and he arrived at Fontainebleau on the 25th of July. His caution shielded him successfully from indiscreet questions. The King saw him several times in private with Madame de Maintenon, Chamillart not being present at all these interviews ; he promised to keep secret all he had to tell him, and the King's promise of secrecy could always be

trusted. But Biron did not tell him much ; he told no falsehoods, but pleaded ignorance, on the ground of having been on detachment before the action and having been taken prisoner. He was a great friend of mine, and I had opportunities for conversing with him freely. He gave me much information ; besides what he told me about the army and the battle, I learnt two circumstances which are worthy to be recorded here.

Prince Eugène's army had not joined at the time of the battle ; but he was there in person, and took command wherever he happened to be by the courtesy of Marlborough, who retained complete authority, but had not acquired the esteem and affection of the army to the same degree as Eugène. Biron told me that, the day after the battle, he was dining with Marlborough in the company of many other officers, when Marlborough suddenly asked him for news of the Prince of Wales, apologising for calling him by that name. Biron, in great surprise, smiled, and said there need be no dispute about the name, because in our own army he was known only as the Chevalier de St. Georges ; and thereupon proceeded to praise him highly. Marlborough listened with great attention, and replied that he was extremely glad to hear the young Prince so well spoken of, because he could not help feeling a deep interest in him. He then began talking about something else ; but Biron particularly noticed the pleasure depicted in the faces of the Duke and of most of the company present. The other story relates to Prince Eugène. While talking to Biron after the battle the Prince spoke highly of the conduct of our Swiss troops, who had in fact greatly distinguished themselves. Biron also praised them. Prince Eugène took occasion to speak of the Swiss in general, and remarked that the position of Colonel-General of the Swiss troops in France was a very brilliant one. " My father held it," he said in an animated tone. " When he died, we hoped that my brother would succeed him ; but the King thought fit to bestow the office on one of his natural sons. He is the master, and there was nothing to be said ; but one is sometimes glad of an opportunity to make people repent of having treated one with contempt ! " Biron answered not a word, and Eugène politely changed the conversation. During Biron's brief stay in their camp he noticed an almost royal magnificence in Prince Eugène's quarters, and a shameful

parsimony in Marlborough's ; the latter almost always dined at other people's tables. He also observed a thorough understanding between the two, the care of details being left chiefly to Prince Eugène ; yet there was no jealousy on the part of Marlborough.

Monseigneur, though he knew Biron intimately, conversed little with him ; but the Duchess of Burgundy did so often, and at great length. He gave her information which enabled her to reply on several points which had been purposely kept obscure. We never had a proper detailed report of the battle ; all the story came out piecemeal. The Duke of Burgundy did not reflect sufficiently how very important it was for him to furnish a full account, which Vendôme took very good care not to supply.

We have now reached a point when it is essentially necessary to bear in mind all that I said to M. de Beauvilliers, during our conversation at Marly, about the Court and its chief personages ; the close alliance between the bastards and Vendôme, on the one hand, and Vaudemont and his influential nieces on the other ; the complete surrender of Chamillart (usually so self-confident) to the influence of M. de Vendôme, M. du Maine, and M. de Vaudemont ; and the devotion shown to the bastards by the principal valets of the household. Bloin, in particular, was their sworn ally ; and he was the chief among the valets, the cleverest, the boldest, and the best-known in society ; he was the one to whom the King spoke most freely ; he had constant access to his person, not only as First Valet-de-Chambre, but also as Governor of Versailles and Marly ; and under his command, at Fontainebleau as elsewhere, were the pages of the household and those dangerous Swiss spies and talebearers whom I mentioned in connection with the terrible scene between the King and Courtenvaux. It must also be borne in mind that all these personages had one interest in common, namely, to discredit and ruin the Duke of Burgundy, in order to deprive him of all influence during the King's life-time, and obtain for themselves undisputed sway over Monseigneur when he should ascend the throne. Such was the common object which united them at present ; without prejudice to their complete liberty to fight it out among themselves afterwards, till the most powerful should obtain the mastery. Mademoiselle Choin and her intimates were up to their necks in this intrigue.

Poor Chamillart, far too honourable a man to connect himself with such a plot if he had understood what he was doing, was a blind instrument in the hands of this clique ; the Dukes de Beauvilliers and de Chevreuse had not the smallest influence over him in this matter, though in general they were his most confidential friends, and, since the recent marriage of his son, had become his near connections. I was still more powerless, in spite of the open and friendly way in which he treated me. His wife and daughters, except the little Dreux, had not a grain of sense ; and none of the people who surrounded him had the slightest real knowledge of court life. Madame la Duchesse was another member of this formidable clique ; nor must the close alliance be overlooked between Madame de Soubise and Madame d'Espinoy and Mademoiselle de Lislebonne.

The disaster of Oudenarde was, for the moment, a crushing blow to this cabal ; its members were reduced to silence while awaiting more detailed accounts. Before long, however, realising the dangerous position of their hero, they began making insinuations ; in whispers at first, to see how they would be received, but afterwards more openly. Finding that no one was in a position to contradict them, their audacity increased ; they sang the praises of Vendôme and quarrelled with anybody who differed from them ; finally, they broke out into open denunciations of the Duke of Burgundy. They would not have ventured to go so far if their first insinuations had not passed unnoticed ; but there was no one in a position to repress them except the King or Monseigneur ; the King had not yet heard what was being said, and Monseigneur was surrounded by the cabal ; besides, he was not of a character to make his authority respected. The general mass of the courtiers were overawed by a clique of persons in such high position ; moreover, they were in the dark, and did not know how to reply. The courage of the cabal rose ; in the absence of details, which Vendôme took good care not to supply, they spread abroad manifestoes abounding in lies and insinuations, some of which could only be described as treasonable. The first which appeared was a letter from Alberoni, a person whom I have already described sufficiently. It is impossible to give an adequate notion of it by extracts, therefore I transcribe it in full. It was as follows :

“ Do not give way any longer, sir, to your natural grief.

Do not be like the majority of your countrymen, who, when the slightest reverse occurs, immediately think that all is lost. I must begin by telling you that the accusations brought against M. de Vendôme are all false, and he treats them with contempt. It is said that he allowed the enemy to steal three marches upon him, and that all he had to do was to defend the line of the Dendre. Now everybody here knows that M. de Vendôme was anxious to defend it ; and that, after three days' discussion, he was obliged to yield to the opinions of others, who wished to cross the Scheldt in order to avoid a battle. His Highness had warned them beforehand that, if they let Prince Eugène perceive their disinclination to fight, he would force an action in spite of them ; and so it turned out. If it is said that His Highness ought to have attacked their advanced guard on the Scheldt, I reply that his own plan was much better ; for, hearing from M. de Biron that a portion of the enemy's army had crossed the river, he wished to attack them while he saw the dust of their main columns still on the other side, half a league from Oudenarde ; but no one else was of that opinion, and he had to give way. That was at ten o'clock in the morning. At four in the afternoon orders were given to M. de Grimaldi, *maréchal-de-camp* in the army of his Catholic Majesty, without M. de Vendôme's knowledge, to attack the enemy ; seeing the attack begun, however, M. de Vendôme said that it must be supported, and sent orders to the left wing to advance, by M. Janet his aide-de-camp, who was killed on his way back. These orders were not carried out owing to some bad advisers of the Duke of Burgundy having informed him that there was an impracticable ravine and marsh in front of him ; although M. de Vendôme and the Count d'Évreux had crossed them an hour before with thirty squadrons. As regards the retreat, M. de Vendôme was opposed to making it by night ; but, as he was supported by no one except the Count d'Évreux, he had to give way. Hardly had he said to the Duke of Burgundy that the army must retire, when everybody mounted horse and rode off, with astonishing precipitation, to Ghent ; it was even proposed that the Princes should take post-horses at Ghent to convey them to Ypres. M. de Vendôme, who was obliged to superintend the rear-guard in person, assisted only by his aides-de-camp, arrived at Ghent about nine in the morning, and instantly resolved to place his army in position behind

the Ghent-Bruges canal, in spite of the remonstrances of all the Generals, who for three days pestered him with advice to continue the retreat till he had effected a junction with the Duke of Berwick. This firmness saved the army and the kingdom, for the panic which prevailed in the army would have caused a worse scandal than that of Ramillies, had not M. de Vendôme, by halting behind the canal, secured Ghent and Bruges, and so restored the spirits and confidence of the troops. By doing so he also reduced the enemy to a state of inaction ; if they meditate a siege now, it must certainly be that of either Ypres, Lille, Mons, or Tournay. Now just consider what strong places these are, and, if the enemy does lay siege to either of them, M. de Vendôme will take Oudenarde, and make himself master of the whole course of the Scheldt ; a glance at the map will show you how serious this would be for the enemy. This is the simple truth, exactly as M. de Vendôme has stated it to the King ; and you may repeat it on my authority. I am a Roman ; that is, I come of a truth-telling race. *In civitate omnium gnara et nihil reticente*, says our Tacitus. To conclude, allow me to say, with all respect, that your nation is quite capable of forgetting the wonderful exploits which this good Prince performed in my own country, for which his name will be held in everlasting honour ; you are *injuriarum et beneficiorum æque immemor*. But the good Prince is easy in his mind, conscious that he has no cause to reproach himself ; for, so long as he acted on his own opinions, he was always successful."

Such was the letter which was immediately circulated everywhere. I must now make a few comments upon it, though its falsehood and artfulness are sufficiently clear.

It must be confessed that, in order to make its falsehoods go down better, it begins with a truth. It is unfortunately only too true that, directly the French experience a reverse, they think all is lost, and behave in such a way as to make their forebodings come true. We saw this after Blenheim, Barcelona, Ramillies, Turin, and all the unfortunate battles of this war ; while our enemies, on the other hand, give each other mutual support, and repair their disasters ; as was seen after Fleurus, Neerwinden, and other victories of ours in the former war. But the fault is not to be imputed to our nation ; it was our Generals who lost their heads after Blenheim and Ramillies, and who did worse after Turin,

where they deliberately prevented the Duke of Orleans, who had been seriously wounded, from carrying out his plan of a retreat into Italy.

The impudence of Alberoni in trying to hoodwink the public about the three marches which M. de Vendôme let the enemy steal on him is astounding. There was never any question of hesitating between two courses. M. de Vendôme himself admitted that there was only one thing to do ; the dispute was merely as to the proper time to do it. The Duke of Burgundy, and all the Generals who were in a position to give an opinion, were so convinced of the danger of delay that for three days they did not cease to urge Vendôme to march at once ; and their complaints that he would not listen were a matter of notoriety in the army. All this story about Vendôme proposing to defend the line of the Dendre is pure invention, designed to make him out a hero, and to insinuate the malignant calumny that the Duke of Burgundy was averse to fighting. It is hard to say who Alberoni thought would believe his story that Vendôme had so little authority over his army that he could not order it to march without the consent of a Council of War. Whose vote does he imagine would have the preponderating influence ? Certainly not that of the Duke of Burgundy, for Vendôme soon afterwards told him publicly that he had only been allowed to join the army on condition of obeying orders. The plain fact is that nobody dared, or had any right, to contradict Vendôme ; he never held any Council of War ; and he is alone responsible for the consequences of his negligence and inaction. The rest of Alberoni's story is equally false and absurd. It was not ten in the morning when Biron came in sight of the enemy, it was two in the afternoon ; it is not true that Vendôme sent orders to the left wing to support an attack which had been begun by Grimaldi without his knowledge, or that these orders were countermanded by the Duke of Burgundy in consequence of false intelligence about an impassable ravine ; Grimaldi did send for orders ; his messenger could not find Vendôme, who had already gone to the support of Biron ; the Duke of Burgundy, knowing that Vendôme had sent orders to Biron to attack, sent word to Grimaldi to do the same ; but when the officer returned with this message he found Grimaldi himself engaged in repelling a warm attack. As for the ravine, everybody knows that a ravine may be

quite impracticable in one place, and within half a mile may turn out to be a mere ditch or hollow, easily crossed by cavalry. All this has nothing to do with the Duke of Burgundy, who would never have thought of ordering or forbidding any movement without Vendôme's authority.

After this pretty little story Alberoni admits the story of the battle itself and comes to the retreat. M. de Vendôme, he says, was against retreating by night; but, being unsupported except by the Count d'Evreux, he had to yield to the majority. This is the only true assertion in the whole letter; but it is so stated as to convey a false impression. Vendôme was not only opposed to retreating by night, he did not want to retreat at all; with his usual extravagance and absurdity he kept declaring that the battle was not lost, that he would hold his ground and renew the fight in the morning. But in reality the whole army was in confusion and disorder; it was under the fire of an enemy greatly superior in numbers, who had penetrated our position in two places; many of our troops were already surrounded, or on the point of being so. Even if reinforcements could have been brought up in the dark, how were they to be placed in position? The only possible result would have been to make the disaster even more complete than it was. But Vendôme never really meant to renew the battle; his object was merely to give his cabal something to say on his behalf, and to throw the responsibility and discredit of a retreat on the Duke of Burgundy. The end of the letter is worthy of the rest. Alberoni a Roman! Not to say that the Rome of to-day is very different from the Rome which Tacitus describes, Alberoni was a native of a little village near Bayonne. His parents had left Italy to settle there under circumstances which look suspiciously like an escape from justice; but I cannot say so for certain, because up to the present nobody has thought it worth while to write a history of the Alberoni family. The father was a gardener, and sold fruit and vegetables at Bayonne. The son returned to their native village near Parma; I have related elsewhere how he became known to the Duke of Parma, and by what infamous methods he acquired the favour of Vendôme.

He winds up his letter by one true statement, at any rate. "The good Prince," says he, "is easy in his mind." It was so. Vendôme was quite at ease; his impudence sustained his spirits; moreover, by long experience, he knew

the strength of his position, and was not afraid to enter into a contest even against the heir-apparent to the Crown. He had powerful backers ; their own interests were bound up with his ; their plans had been carefully laid ; his mind therefore was at ease. For once Alberoni speaks the truth.

In a few days the Court, town, and provinces were inundated with copies of this letter. Two days after it had begun to appear, and while people were still wondering at its audacity, another letter was put into circulation, but very cautiously. I saw a copy in the hands of the Duke de Villeroy, to whom it had been lent for a few hours only, on condition that he should not have it copied ; I guessed that he had it from Bloin, who was a boon companion of his. It was written by Campistron, one of those ragged, starving poets who will do anything for a living. The Abbé de Chaulier had picked him up somewhere, and established him in the household of the Grand-Prior ; but he had left his service as a rat leaves a falling house, and taken refuge with Vendôme. The latter employed him as his secretary, though his handwriting was quite illegible ; and to this circumstance was due the rise of Alberoni, for Vendôme used to dictate to him such letters as he did not wish to expose to Campistron's copyists. This letter was composed in a good style, and with such knowledge of military matters that it was pretty clear that some soldier had given him a helping hand. Compared with this letter Alberoni's was mildness itself ; it was full of lies ; the real facts were speciously misrepresented, and the truth artfully concealed, so as to attack the personal honour and courage of the Duke of Burgundy ; it is impossible to imagine a piece more ingeniously composed with this object, or seasoned with more cruel sarcasms. Owing to its outrageous nature it was not circulated broadcast as Alberoni's had been, in order to arouse and excite public opinion. It was entrusted to sure hands ; to be shown everywhere, but with an affectation of mystery which added to its attractions, and served the further purpose of insinuating how unfortunate it was for Vendôme that he was not in a position to state all that had occurred, or to defend himself at the expense of the Duke of Burgundy. With all this ostensible mystery the letter was, nevertheless, widely circulated ; it was read in the cafés, in public gambling-houses and places of debauchery ; it even fell into the hands of journalists. Care

was taken that it should be seen in the provinces and in foreign countries ; but always with such precautions that no copies were allowed to fall into hands in which they might have proved dangerous to the chiefs of the cabal.

The Count d'Évreux was the only man of quality to follow the example of these two flunkys. He was Vendôme's first cousin. His brothers were in disgrace ; he himself had nothing to expect from the King, and very little from his father, the Duke de Bouillon ; he considered, therefore, that his only hope of advancement was in attaching himself to Vendôme. This was the explanation of the part he played on the day of Oudenarde ; he now sought to gain Vendôme's good-will completely by becoming his champion. Accordingly he wrote to Crosat, his father-in-law, an apology for Vendôme, conceived in the same spirit as the other two letters, and almost as offensive as Campistron's with regard to the Duke of Burgundy, though he had always been treated by him with marked kindness. This letter was intended to be shown ; Crosat, vain of his connection with a son-in-law of such distinction, and proud to let people see that he corresponded with him, took care not to keep it secret. For several days he showed to any one who cared to see it, and even allowed some copies to be taken. The noise it made aroused the attention of the Duchess de Bouillon, a very clever woman ; and she was alarmed for the consequences. She went to Crosat with the haughty and imposing air which she knew so well how to assume, scolded him violently for having compromised her son in such a way, and gave herself no rest till she had withdrawn every copy of the letter from circulation. She wrote to her son, to frighten him and make him ashamed of his folly ; and, as it was impossible to deny that he had written a letter to Crosat, she made him write another, which she hoped might be passed off as the original. I do not know whether she actually sent him a draft of it ; but her courier on his return brought back a letter such as she wished to have. We shall see, before long, what good use she made of it.

In the meantime, while Alberoni's letter and extracts from the other two were becoming public property, the chiefs of the cabal began to show their hand. Their emissaries paraphrased the letter in the cafés, in public places, in private houses. The market-halls, where Beau-

fort was so long supreme during the minority of Louis XIV, resounded with them ; so did the Pont-Neuf and the houses of ill-fame. Vaudevilles, verses, atrocious songs against the heir to the Crown, and in praise of Vendôme, were heard all over Paris, and spread through the provinces, nobody seeming to care about stopping them. At Court and in society they were received with applause by libertines and people of fashion ; persons of greater insight and more artful policy joined in the cry ; in short, the public was so carried away that in less than a week any one would have been ashamed to speak well of the Duke of Burgundy, even in his paternal house. A couple of days later it had become dangerous to do so, because the chiefs of the cabal, encouraged by the success of their well-laid plot, began to show their hand and side openly with Vendôme ; letting it be seen that they looked upon his cause as their own, and that any one who took part against him would sooner or later have to reckon with them.

Before matters came to this pitch the Duke de Beauvilliers, remembering what I said to him in the gardens of Marly, came to my room, his heart full of grief, to make a sort of apology and acknowledge his mistake. I contented myself with telling him that a man in high office gains nothing by ignoring all the selfish schemes and plots which go on at Court ; and convinced him at last that my eyes were not utterly blinded by my dislike of particular persons and their vices, or of unfounded pretensions to rank. I agreed with him that the stories which had arisen were beyond anything that might have been expected ; but I pointed out that the most incredible things happen oftener than one might suppose, and that it was not impossible to foresee them if, while dwelling in the very temple of Ambition, one does not wilfully refuse to recognise ambitious persons, or make it a point of conscience to think them incapable of carrying out the designs which ambition inspires. I had several conversations with him and the Duke de Chevreuse, in which we discussed the best means of opening the King's eyes, and putting an end to this outburst of fury. For it must not be supposed that every one at Court was corrupted and gained over to the side of Vendôme ; there were others, among them Marshal de Boufflers, who only kept silence because they were afraid to speak out ; and because of the obvious futility of any attempt to stem the torrent.

CHAPTER VII

1708

The Duchess of Burgundy's anger aroused against Vendôme—Madame de Maintenon sides with her, and is temporarily reconciled with M. de Beauvilliers—Alarm of the cabal—The King annoyed by the Duchess of Burgundy's complaints—Chamillart's advice to the Duke of Burgundy—The Duchess's anger—She determines, in conjunction with Madame de Maintenon, to ruin Chamillart—Harcourt assists them—Villeroy and d'Antin on the same side—D'Antin and the Duchess of Burgundy—Annoyance of Madame la Duchesse—Her character—Madame de Villeroy brings about an alliance between the Duchess of Burgundy and the Duchess of Orleans—A league of Italian States against the Emperor proposed—The King misses a great opportunity—Marshal Boufflers offers to defend Lille—His offer accepted—The Allies invest Lille—Braggadocio of Vendôme and his cabal—Vendôme ordered to relieve Lille at any cost—Anxiety of the Court—A battle hourly expected—I bet four pistoles that Lille will be taken without a battle—My bet misrepresented to the King to my injury—Manœuvres of the armies—Fresh outburst of calumnies and lampoons against the Duke of Burgundy.

THE two Dukes and I settled what advice should be given to the Duke of Burgundy regarding his conduct with the army and his letters to the Court ; and in the meanwhile, through Madame de Nogaret, I told the Duchess of Burgundy everything I thought she ought to know. She herself sent that lady to consult with me, and told me candidly how she stood with the King and Madame de Maintenon ; what she could, and could not, do. I do not think she had any love for the Duke of Burgundy personally ; I fancy his affection bored her ; that she found his piety rather tiresome, and feared lest it should become still more so in the future. But with all this she felt the value of his love, and how necessary his confidence would be to her in after-life. She was anxious for his reputation ; on that would depend his influence for many years, till he should himself be King ; if he were now discredited, and became a source of grief and shame to the King and Monseigneur, his life would be unendurable, and she must share his misfortunes. Through Madame de Nogaret I made

her understand who the people were that she had to deal with. She was by nature very gentle and timid, but the gravity of this crisis roused her; she felt herself bitterly offended by Vendôme's insults to her husband, and the atrocious calumnies published by his emissaries. Strict and conscientious as was the watch which the Duke of Burgundy kept over himself, he had not refrained from pouring out his heart to his wife; and his letters, with all that she heard from other quarters, were sharp incentives to action. She did act accordingly, and with such success that she prevailed over M. du Maine's veiled artifices and his charms, usually so enchanting for Madame de Maintenon. She won her over; she moved her to compassion, and induced her to speak to the King, who was hemmed in on every side, and with whom she alone could put in a word on behalf of his grandson and of the truth. The Princess succeeded so well that she actually worked a miracle.

Since the affair of the Archbishop of Cambrai Madame de Maintenon, having failed in her attempt to overthrow M. de Beauvilliers, had seen him only on rare occasions, and had still more rarely spoken to him, and then merely on trivial subjects. She had never seen him in private, and always looked upon him as an enemy. On this occasion her desire to serve the Duke and Duchess of Burgundy led her to ask for a private interview with M. de Beauvilliers, in order to make herself acquainted with the facts, and concert plans for the future. She saw him several times, told him what had passed between the King and herself, and consulted him freely. She had by no means forgiven him for retaining his office in spite of her, as we shall see later on. But so long as she wanted his advice and help throughout this campaign, she met him cordially and in good faith; and on his side he profited by her advice. During all this my name was never mentioned either to or by Madame de Maintenon; but I heard all that was going on from M. de Beauvilliers and from Madame de Nogaret.

Madame de Maintenon made the King uneasy and angry by telling him about the letters, and all the gossip that was going about. He spoke about it at a meeting of the Council, and asked rather angrily if anybody had seen the letters. Torcy, who, though timid, was really indignant at the

calumnies which were being spread abroad, had put a copy of Alberoni's letter into his pocket, perhaps by the advice of M. de Beauvilliers ; by the King's orders he produced and read it. The King, on hearing it, expressed some indignation, though he was careful to make some excuses for M. de Vendôme ; turning to Chamillart, he asked him rather severely why he had not told him about those letters. He got out of it by saying that he had not seen them ; whereupon the King immediately ordered him to write in strong terms to Vendôme and his Alberoni (such was his expression) and to Crosat and his son-in-law (such again was the term he used) telling them to keep silence ; and to the three last that they deserved punishment. He was obeyed at once. I do not understand why Campistron was omitted ; perhaps the King felt that the gravity of his crime deserved a more severe punishment than mere words, and was unwilling to inflict one which would have fallen in some degree upon Vendôme himself. Crosat got out of the affair pretty well, thanks to Madame de Bouillon's foresight. The Count d'Évreux's second letter was circulated, and the Bouillons asserted firmly that it was the only one ; it contained nothing but generalities, statements that all was not lost, that the army still consisted of 80,000 men in good spirits, and so on. M. de Bouillon took this letter to the King, with humble apologies, which by dint of long practice came easy to members of his family. But this letter said too little to be passed off easily as the original one. Some charitable persons pointed this out to the King and Madame de Maintenon, and told them about Madame de Bouillon's clever stroke of policy ; so they were not taken in. The Duke of Burgundy was so, however, or thought it right to pretend to be so ; he accepted the apologies and protestations of the Count d'Évreux, and tried to soothe any sore feeling felt by the King's reprimand by treating him with marked favour. This conduct offended public opinion, and cooled the zeal of many who had taken the part of the Duke of Burgundy, both in the Army and at Court.

It was not without alarm that the members of the cabal saw Madame de Maintenon tear herself away from M. du Maine to devote herself to the Duchess of Burgundy. The King's remarks in Council, which they rightly attributed to her influence, also alarmed them ; but they reflected that, after all, what the King had said and done was not



Inyk. door de Franssen, onder den Marechal de Boufflers
ge Bombardeerd den 1 Junij 1692.

La Bombardement de la Ville de Liège par les Français
sous le Marechal de Boufflers le 1 Juin 1692.
Dessiné par M. de la Roche.

Bombardment of Liège

much ; considering his duty to his grandson and the authority which he usually allowed Madame de Maintenon to exert over himself. They came to the conclusion that the King was not really angry, and that if they persevered they would put him in a dilemma between his partiality for M. du Maine, M. de Vendôme, and his principal valets on the one hand, and his habitual deference to Madame de Maintenon and his affection for the Duchess of Burgundy on the other ; they hoped the two ladies would end by wearying and annoying the King, and he would refuse to listen to them. At any rate, they saw that if they did not go on as they had begun all their grand schemes would vanish like smoke ; they continued, therefore, to circulate the letters as widely as they could, and spread abroad the most atrocious and insidious calumnies. They were too well counselled to be mistaken. Bloin and M. du Maine knew the King thoroughly ; they were always about his person, and from long familiarity he liked their society. As the blows of the cabal fell faster the Duchess of Burgundy redoubled her complaints, and Madame de Maintenon backed her up ; but the King was so much annoyed that on more than one occasion he scolded the Princess harshly ; once he told her that there was no bearing with her peevishness and ill-temper. This speech produced an effect so far as Flanders. Chamillart, infatuated with M. du Maine and M. de Vendôme, and completely led by the nose by M. de Vaudemont and his nieces, let himself be persuaded to write to the Duke of Burgundy ; and, forgetting their relative positions, he allowed himself to advise him to live on good terms with M. de Vendôme.

This letter produced all the effect hoped for by those who inspired it. The spirit of the Duke of Burgundy, who had formerly behaved so brilliantly when associated with Marshal de Boufflers at Nimeguen, and with Tallard and Marchin at Brisach, had been crushed since the beginning of this campaign by Vendôme's hostility and studied insolence. He had been brought up in absolute terror of the King (fear would be far too mild a term) ; and, knowing to what degree Vendôme possessed the King's confidence and affection, he was equally overawed by him. His very wisdom made him distrustful of his own abilities ; and his great piety, as yet not very enlightened, was a clog and hindrance to him. He was very sensitive ; Vendôme's

conduct towards him and the two insolent speeches which he had addressed to him so publicly, filled him with indignation ; but the more keenly he felt them the more his religious scruples prevented him from giving way to resentment.

There was no one in the army to whom he could open his heart and apply for guidance ; he did not confide in Gamaches and D'O, and they would not have been good advisers if he had. His only correspondents were M. de Beauvilliers and the Duchess of Burgundy ; the letters of the former were full of pious and prudent counsels, which he thought were wanting in the Duchess's. In his perplexity he lost the frank, cheerful demeanour which had been so pleasing to the army ; he looked gloomy and embarrassed, and spent much of his time shut up in his own room. This letter of Chamillart's arrived at the same time as the news of the King's anger against the Duchess ; for she confided it to him, so that he might not blame her for not doing more than was in her power. It had the effect of increasing his depression ; his low spirits were perceptible to everybody. By degrees he became more friendly with Vendôme, who, according to his usual custom, visited him in his quarters with an air of haughty insolence, and even had the audacity to take Alberoni and his staff with him. The young Prince made a point of conversing more with Vendôme, and went so far as to speak occasionally to Alberoni. This weakness produced an unfavourable impression on the army. Those who up to the present had openly taken the Duke of Burgundy's part began to be afraid, and to hold their tongues ; his detractors congratulated themselves and triumphed openly ; the cabal made the most of the opportunity, and quietly took care that Chamillart's letter and the King's rebuff to the Duchess of Burgundy should become known to the public.

The Duke of Burgundy, knowing that his change of conduct towards Vendôme would not please his wife, excused it to her on the ground of Chamillart's letter ; he said it could not have been written without a suggestion from higher quarters, and he was afraid of being recalled ignominiously if he did not pay some attention to the advice contained in it. The Duchess was furious with Chamillart, and never forgave him. I heard all that went on, not only from persons of opinions similar to my own, with whom I was in constant consultation, but also from Chamillart himself,

and from some other persons who, while remaining neutral, were in a position to know ; they spoke to me without reserve, though I took no pains to conceal my opinions. I was annoyed with Chamillart for being so short-sighted ; the Duchess's anger made me tremble for him ; I warned his daughters about it, but their eyes were blinded by vanity ; they assured me that I was misinformed. At last Madame de Dreux did begin to see that something was wrong ; she spoke to the Duchess of Burgundy, who dissembled her feelings, and the little Dreux thought everything was safe. Vendôme, with all his overweening pride, came to a different conclusion. The piety and timidity of the Prince reassured him, so far as he was concerned ; but he was uneasy at what he heard about the Duchess of Burgundy and Madame de Maintenon ; he feared the resentment of an offended Italian, who would make it a point of honour to have her revenge ; and he well knew what opportunities she had for influencing the King, especially when Madame de Maintenon made common cause with her. These powerful considerations induced Vendôme to humble himself so far as to tell the Duke of Burgundy how sorry he was that the Duchess spoke so unkindly of him ; he made no attempt to justify his conduct, but merely begged the Duke to write to her, saying that he did not venture to do so himself. The most surprising part of the story is, that the Duke of Burgundy undertook to convey this message. It was received with the contempt which it deserved. The Duchess asked her husband to tell Vendôme that she had not been talking about him and did not know why her name should have been mentioned ; at the same time she begged to assure him, once for all, that she would never have any liking or respect for Vendôme, the man in the whole world whom she most hated and despised. We shall see how courageously she acted up to her words. The dryness of her message to Vendôme let him see how matters stood. He took no further steps to conciliate her ; perhaps his pride made him repent of having done so much, little as it was.

These important intrigues gave rise to some minor ones. Harcourt was in Normandy ; he was no longer in the good graces of Madame de Maintenon, who had a way of taking people up and dropping them again without any particular reason. He thought he saw his way to profit by these strange events ; he knew Chamillart's position, and, as his

great ambition still was to be a Minister, he proposed to gain his ends at Chamillart's expense. He therefore assumed the rôle of a good citizen, alarmed at the state of public affairs, and arrived unexpectedly at Fontainebleau. There he found Cattinat, whom the King had sent for to confer with him ; he tried hard to make people believe that he also had been sent for, but, to his great annoyance, he failed to obtain a private audience of the King. He stooped so low as to pay court to Madame d'Heudicourt, and even to Madame de Dangeau, with whom he had no difficulty in passing himself off as a great commander and a statesman. He alarmed them so much by his talk that they gave Madame de Maintenon no peace till she consented to hear what he had to say. In this fashion his visit was not entirely thrown away, and he managed to obtain readmission to that sanctuary.

Another man was quietly at work—Marshal de Villeroy, whose spirits rose as he watched the blunders of the man appointed to repair his own. He made short and rare visits to Fontainebleau ; and whenever he came Madame de Maintenon received him, with great mystery, at her own house in the town. She had always liked him ; and she was so terrified by the state of affairs in Flanders that she was ready to have recourse to anybody. She asked him to give her his opinion about the war in that country : he drew up reports, and sent them through Desmarets, who had always been his friend. Knowing her sentiments with respect to Vendôme and Chamillart, he found great fault with both ; and so, without knowing it, Harcourt and he backed up each other's opinions. He did Chamillart much harm ; and his criticisms were more acceptable than Harcourt's because he condemned Vendôme more unreservedly. This secret communication went on throughout the campaign, and inspired Villeroy with the most flattering hopes, although he could perceive no favourable change in the King.

D'Antin was another who formed ambitious projects. Thanks to the opportunities afforded by his office, he was continually in attendance in the King's private rooms : except at the *lever* and *coucher*, the most privileged *valets-de-chambre* had not access more freely to the King's person. During these hours of privacy the King was often glad to escape from the restraint which he imposed upon himself elsewhere, and relieved himself by a few remarks on the

news of the day. D'Antin seized his opportunities ; being really an excellent and capable soldier, so long as he was not exposed to personal danger, he found it easy to outshine the valets, and to take the lead in the conversation, even when the two bastards were present. The King, in great uneasiness about the war in Flanders, was glad to hear his judicious and sensible remarks on the subject ; sometimes even when Chamillart came in with news d'Antin would boldly draw near, and, if a map was spread out, he would point out in an instant what they were looking for, and give explanations. He lost no opportunity of showing off his talents, taking care at the same time to use plenty of flattery.

This advantageous situation made him of importance to both parties as a source of information respecting the King's sentiments ; but far more important to the Duchess of Burgundy than to Vendôme's partisans, for they heard everything through the valets and M. du Maine ; whereas the Princess felt that the King was on his guard against her on matters relating to Flanders, and that, because of her, he did not speak so freely to Madame de Maintenon on that subject as on almost all others. The valets were all devoted to M. du Maine and to Bloin ; some were under the direct influence of M. de Vendôme ; Madame de Maintenon seldom saw them, and could trust hardly any of them except Fagon ; and he, though as a man of honour he deplored what he saw going on, declined as a man of prudence to say anything likely to compromise himself. The young Princess, therefore, had recourse to d'Antin, and began to treat him with more distinction. He felt it, and, like a clever man, saw an opportunity to acquire her good-will without offending the leaders of the opposite party. He made a point of giving her all the information she required, and gained her confidence to such a degree that the Princess, who had very justly formed a high opinion of his talents and capacity, showed him some of the more important letters she received from her husband, and consulted him as to how she should answer them.

I heard of all this through Madame de Nogaret, who, by the Princess's orders, often told me what d'Antin had advised, and asked me what I thought of it. He availed himself so well of his opportunities that he ventured to tread, though very lightly, in the footsteps of the Abbé de Polignac.

His boldness did not touch the heart of the Princess, but it was not calculated to offend her. He became a constant attendant at her card-parties, was admitted to her rooms during her hours of privacy, and attempted, though without much success, to penetrate by these means into Madame de Maintenon's sanctuary. He aimed at nothing less than filling Chamillart's place ; in this way he and Harcourt became rivals without knowing it ; but d'Antin's chances of success were far better than Harcourt's. When I say "they hoped to fill his place," I must explain myself. It was not his office they wanted ; they well knew that the King would never give the appointment of Secretary of State to a nobleman, and Harcourt was too proud to accept it. But they both hoped to be admitted to the Council, and to be given an undefined authority over Chamillart's successor in all matters relating to the war. Full of these hopes, d'Antin was lightly following the path to his goal, when Madame la Duchesse became aware that his intimacy with the Duchess of Burgundy was no longer restricted to such matters as card-playing and other frivolous amusements ; and the discovery made her extremely angry.

Though her shape was disfigured by an almost imperceptible deformity, her whole appearance showed that she was the offspring of the tenderest love ; and her disposition was such that she could play with love herself without ever becoming a victim to it. Every kind of amusement seemed expressly designed for her ; with her free and gracious manners she had the art of putting every one at his ease ; there was a natural charm about her which made her most insignificant actions seem pleasing ; her wit also was natural, and also charming. Though it was notorious that she loved nobody but herself, it was impossible to refrain from trying to please her ; and there was no one, however slight his acquaintance with her, who did not flatter himself that he had succeeded in doing so. She subjugated even those who were most afraid of her ; and persons who had the best reasons for hating her had often to force themselves to bear them in mind, if they would avoid falling a prey to her enchantments. She was never out of temper in the slightest degree ; lively, gay, witty, and amusing, she had spent her youth amid frivolity and pleasures, in all of which she indulged, whenever she had the opportunity, to the extent of debauchery. She had great capacity for intrigues and

for business of all kinds, but little perseverance or tenacity of purpose ; and, with all her charms, she was disdainful and sarcastic ; incapable of friendship, very capable of hatred ; and when she did hate she was spiteful and malicious, full of the most cruel tricks. She could compose the wittiest verses, and would cheerfully cover with ridicule persons in whose company she passed her life, and who, to all appearances, enjoyed her friendship. She was one of the Sirens of the poets ; as charming and as dangerous. With advancing years ambition had crept in, but she did not give up her pleasures ; and for a long time the outward show of frivolity served to mask her real designs.

She had enticed Monseigneur away from the Princess of Conti, who was dull and ill-tempered ; and his marked affection gave her a very influential position. It was inevitable that her views on the subject of the Duke of Burgundy should be identical with those of Mademoiselle Choin and Vaudemont's nieces ; it was of vital importance for her to prevent him from acquiring any influence likely to interfere with her own over Monseigneur. Moreover, she stood in need of Monseigneur's protection against M. le Duc, who was jealous and brutal, and of a ferocious temper, which fear of the King and his hope of being allowed to command an army had hitherto kept within bounds. The Princess of Conti had lost all her influence. The Duchess of Orleans had none ; she had all the qualities necessary for playing a leading part ; but the time for speaking of her has not yet arrived. The other Princess of Conti, Madame la Princesse, and Madame had never counted for anything. The Duchess of Burgundy was therefore the only person whom Madame la Duchesse could possibly regard as a rival. Amiable as she was, and much younger than Madame la Duchesse, it was inevitable that she should be treated with respect and consideration, even by persons whom Madame la Duchesse reckoned among her own slaves. Nangis was one of these ; and, for any one with eyes to perceive the comedy which was going on, his conduct was an amusing spectacle, of which Marly was the usual and most convenient theatre.

Although Madame la Duchesse had always been too impatient of restraint to take much trouble to win the King's affection, she was very jealous of the influence which the Duchess of Burgundy had acquired over him and Madame

de Maintenon. She was alarmed lest she should acquire a similar influence over Monseigneur ; for she saw that the young Princess tried to please him, and had some reason to fear that she had already found the way to his heart. Always mistress of herself, she did not betray her jealousy, but went beyond the limits prescribed by duty and respect to pay such attentions to the Duchess of Burgundy as she thought most likely to please her. The great defect in the character of the latter was timidity. She had heard so much of what lay concealed under the charms of Madame la Duchesse that she was frightened, and trembled as she responded to her advances ; which she did with much politeness, but nothing more. This reserve only made Madame la Duchesse more determined to overcome it ; but another intrigue disconcerted her projects.

Before the arrival of the Duchess of Burgundy at our Court it was the custom for the ladies to divide themselves as they pleased between the three daughters of the King, each attaching herself more to one than to the other two. The Duchess de Villeroy, who, for reasons which are not worth mentioning, had passed the first years of her married life in a sort of retreat, living with the Court but hardly sharing in its pleasures, attached herself to the Duchess of Orleans, who also led a very quiet life, far removed from anything like dissipation. The two ladies suited each other very well, and a close friendship sprang up between them which always lasted. After a time Marshal de Villeroy, jealous of the familiar access to the Duchess of Burgundy which was allowed to a very few young married ladies, among them Madame de Saint-Simon and Madame de Lausun, asked Madame de Maintenon to allow the same privilege to his daughter-in-law, and it was at once granted. The Duchess de Villeroy soon became a great favourite with the Duchess of Burgundy, and continued to be so to the end.

In this situation she conducted herself with prudence and dignity. She was a person of very little ability ; but she was sensible, courageous, frank, and sincere ; very proud ; not good-tempered, sometimes even purposely rude. She loved few persons, but was all the more attached to those whom she did love. Like her uncle, the Archbishop of Reims, she used to speak so very candidly about her birth that her hearers sometimes felt embarrassed. In person she was tall and rather high-shouldered, with bad

teeth and a disagreeable laugh ; but her face, though singular, was very handsome, and her bearing extremely noble and imposing. Nobody adorned a Court or a festival more than she did, and she was a very good dancer. The King, although his religious sentiments were entirely changed since his younger days, always retained his liking for agreeable women. He used to ask the Duchess de Villeroi to Marly, and to all his entertainments ; at first to please Marshal de Villeroi, but afterwards for her own sake.

The reconciliation between the Duchess of Orleans and Madame la Duchesse which followed the death of Madame de Montespan had not lasted long ; for Madame la Duchesse could not forgive her sister the superior rank she had acquired by her marriage, and received all her advances with coldness. The Duchess de Villeroi, as the favourite friend of the Duchess of Orleans, had spoken freely on the subject of Madame la Duchesse ; and the latter had not spared her in her turn. Madame de Villeroi now came to the conclusion that the best service she could render to the Duchess of Orleans would be to bring about an alliance between her and the Duchess of Burgundy. She devoted all her energies to this object, and she succeeded. The two Princesses were not very well suited to each other ; the indolence, reserved manners, and caution of the Duchess of Orleans did not seem congenial to the vivacity and freedom of the Duchess of Burgundy, and both were extremely timid ; nevertheless, a real and lasting friendship sprang up between them, of which we shall see the consequences hereafter. It certainly was to the advantage of both Princesses. The Duchess of Burgundy knew the King's weakness for his daughters ; she dared not hold aloof from all three. At one time, seeing the affection of Monseigneur for the Princess of Conti, she had thought of making a friend of her ; but when Monseigneur's feelings changed she dropped her project. She knew that Madame la Duchesse had complained of her to the King and Monseigneur for having rejected her advances, and was trying to make believe that she looked down on the Princesses. An alliance with the Duchess of Orleans would disprove this insinuation, and it was the more suitable because the Duke of Orleans was her mother's brother. The alliance had even stronger attractions for the Duchess of Orleans.

Having been forced into a marriage with a Prince far above her in position, who piqued himself on his indifference to her and paraded his love-affairs with other women, she found herself isolated in the Court ; she had three daughters, the eldest approaching marriageable age ; their birth was a bar to any prospect of establishing them in Germany ; every consideration urged her to try for a marriage between her eldest daughter and the Duke of Berry ; and for that object the Duchess of Burgundy would be a powerful ally.

Madame la Duchesse, who was in the same position, also ventured to aspire to this marriage for her own daughter ; she was sure of Monseigneur, but she could not disguise from herself that her position with regard to the Duchess of Burgundy was a serious obstacle in the way of her hopes. It was with extreme displeasure that she saw the Duchess of Burgundy assert herself as she did after the battle of Oudenarde. Up to that time the Court had paid no great attention to a young Princess whose influence did not extend beyond granting trifling favours ; now everybody began to see that she was capable of greater things, and might very possibly have both the will and the power to become the mainspring of the Court, perhaps of the Government. This went to the heart of Madame la Duchesse like a dagger. Henceforth she altered her behaviour to the Duchess of Burgundy ; she no longer showed her attentions or made advances to her ; she treated her with marked and insolent neglect. She did not stop there ; she ventured to laugh at her, spoke of her in an unbecoming way, and threatened her with Monseigneur's displeasure, in the hearing of persons who, she hoped, would repeat what she had said. The Princess did hear of her threats ; but they had not the intended effect of frightening her ; they served merely to arouse her hatred.

In this situation it is not surprising that Madame la Duchesse should feel herself insulted by d'Antin's attentions to the Duchess of Burgundy. She reproached him for allying himself with her enemy ; d'Antin laughed, and tried to pass it off as a jest, but went on his way all the same. His sister became still more angry ; she began to make malicious comments on the relations between her brother and the Duchess of Burgundy. That frightened d'Antin ; he dared not draw back too quickly, but he tried to appease his sister by showing rather less attention to the Princess ; perhaps

he was clever enough to turn his conduct to advantage with both of them. However that may be, it was amusing for those whose eyes could penetrate the surface of these curious intrigues to watch d'Antin's embarrassment, and to see him show, more clearly than he intended, how annoyed he often was because he could not be in two places at the same moment. This went on during the whole visit to Fontainebleau. In the end the lucky Gascon was clever enough to escape without alienating the Duchess of Burgundy, and without an open quarrel with Madame la Duchesse. I saw all this only through other people's eyes. Chamillart's daughters and my sister-in-law used to spend nearly every evening with Madame la Duchesse, who concealed nothing from them; they were often there till late at night, and d'Antin was there too. They told me everything they saw and heard; and, by comparing their reports with what I picked up elsewhere, I was in a position to understand what was going on.

In June the Emperor caused the Diet of Ratisbon to pass a decree declaring that serious encroachments had been made on the Imperial rights in Italy; and announced his intention of resuming all usurped fiefs, and generally reasserting his authority in that country. This edict caused great consternation at Rome and throughout Italy. The Pope, urged on by the Republic of Venice, proposed to our King that a league of the Italian States should be formed in conjunction with France; it was hoped that the Duke of Savoy would also join it. The King received these advances coldly; he thought there was little probability of the Duke of Savoy joining the league, and he never sufficiently appreciated the advantage of distracting the enemy's attention by diversions. It was with difficulty that he could be induced to supply the Pope with arms and officers, or to allow him to raise men in his own county of Avignon. We were suffering at that time from the effects of the disaster of Oudenarde. Artois was occupied by the enemy; Arras, Doullens, and Picardy were threatened. The King was much depressed by this invasion, such a thing having been unheard of since his minority.

Madame de Maintenon was endeavouring to have Vendôme recalled and replaced in his command by the Prince of Conti, who had openly taken the side of the Duke of Burgundy in the discussions about Flanders. On the other

hand, the League of Italy wanted to have the Prince of Conti for a leader, so as to avoid all disputes among the Generals. The King could not make up his mind what to do. It was resolved, however, to send an Ambassador to Rome; and Marshal d'Estrées offered himself for the post, as equally qualified to conduct negotiations or to command an army. I heard that my name had also been mentioned; I had the same objections which I had felt on the previous occasion; and I spoke strongly on the subject to M. de Beauvilliers, the Chancellor, and Chamillart. I represented that whoever was sent ought to be capable of commanding an army, and urged the superior claims of Marshal d'Estrées on that ground; for I cared little who went to Rome so long as it was not myself. A few days later I heard that no Ambassador would be sent, as it was doubtful whether the Pope could afford him sufficient protection.

M. du Maine found out what was going on, and was alarmed at the possibility of the Prince of Conti being sent to Flanders; the cabal of which he was the moving spirit were no less terrified at the prospect. The recall of Vendôme would have been a dreadful blow to them after succeeding so well in their designs up to the present; they trusted that, before the end of the campaign, he would complete his task of crushing and discrediting the young Prince. Vaudemont came to the rescue. He drew up a very able report, in which he demonstrated the practicability and importance of forming the League of Italy; this he entrusted to Tessé, asking him to produce it as his own. Tessé accordingly gave it to Torcy, who had always been in favour of the League; Torcy was much struck by its clearness and ability, the more so because he knew the limitations of Tessé's talents. He read it at a meeting of the Council, and it decided the King. The Nuncio and the Venetian Ambassador had long audiences, and soon afterwards the King had a private conversation with the Prince of Conti. Madame de Maintenon also had a long interview with him at her house in the town, the place where, during the stay of the Court at Fontainebleau, she usually saw persons with whom she wished to converse without interruption. I do not think she had ever talked to the Prince of Conti in this way before, and the audience gave rise to much speculation. Some days later it was announced that Tessé would go to Italy as the King's plenipotentiary, with

leave to assume the character of Ambassador whenever he thought fit, in order to prepare everything for the arrival of the Prince of Conti. In the meantime the Pope set an example to the other Italian States by raising men and fortifying some posts. With some trouble he obtained the consent of the Sacred College to use the treasure which Sixtus V had amassed and deposited in the castle of St. Angelo, to provide for great emergencies ; it amounted to 5,000,000 livres in gold.

If this League had been better concerted, and quietly organised, it would have raised up a formidable enemy to the Emperor on the side of Italy, and perhaps given a favourable turn to the war. But the King, who ought to have been the first to propose it and give it all the assistance in his power, could only be induced with great difficulty to consent to the scheme, and the opportunity which he lost by his hesitation was perhaps the most precious offered to him during the whole course of his reign. Even as it was, the Allies were greatly alarmed at the prospect of so formidable a diversion. Except in Flanders, where they were too deeply committed to retire, they laid aside all thought of aggressive action till they had made themselves secure in Italy.

In Flanders the enemy levied forced contributions on the province of Artois to the value of over 3,500,000 livres ; and they insisted that nearly the whole of it should be paid in provisions, thus indicating their intention of engaging in some great siege. Their object could be only Ypres, Mons, Lille, or Tournai. Prince Eugène had prepared an immense convoy at Brussels, consisting of more than 5,000 waggons, which he escorted with his whole army to join Marlborough. Vendôme proposed to attack this convoy on the march ; it was a good plan, and the chances of success appeared favourable ; nevertheless, the Duke of Burgundy objected to it, and found a few supporters, though the majority of Generals were in favour of attacking. I confess candidly I do not understand his motives for opposing the attempt, especially considering all that had been said after the disaster of Oudenarde. M. de Vendôme, usually so determined to have his own way, yielded at once on this occasion, merely putting his opinion on record ; and the convoy was allowed to pass unmolested. He was carrying out his design ; not that of winding up the campaign successfully, but of bringing

irretrievable discredit on the Duke of Burgundy. Obstinacy and insolence had served his turn at Oudenarde ; he hoped for equal success from his complaisance on this occasion. Such was the result of giving the Duke of Burgundy no better advisers than d'O and Gamaches. The young Prince explained his reasons to the King and to his wife, in some fear of their disapproval. The Princess was much disappointed, but had the good sense not to show it except to her most intimate friends ; the King, seeing that the chance had been lost, affected to approve of his grandson's reasons. What surprised me most was that Chamillart, talking the matter over with me in private, insisted that the Duke of Burgundy was right. I asked him to give me his reasons for thinking so ; and he promised to explain them on some future day, which never arrived. My own belief is that he had none ; but that, having blamed the young Prince unreasonably about Oudenarde, he thought to make up for it by taking his part, equally unreasonably, on this occasion.

Marshal de Boufflers was by no means content with his enforced inaction after having commanded armies for so long. His regular functions as Governor of Flanders were suspended since that province had become the seat of war. He was a dull man, but full of honour and courage ; personally devoted to the King, and a true lover of his country. Feeling sure that the enemy intended to besiege Lille, he asked the King's permission to throw himself into the place and take charge of its defence ; and, after some hesitation, his offer was accepted. He raised as much money as he could on his own credit, and started for Lille on the 26th of July. The garrison was strong in numbers, consisting of twenty-one battalions of infantry, two of dragoons, and some cavalry ; but most of the battalions were raw, and lately raised, and there was a deficiency of powder. Boufflers raised 3,000 volunteers among the young men of the town, and also collected more than 4,000 stragglers from Oudenarde, whom he found scattered about the neighbourhood.

Our army was still quietly encamped at Lawendeghem, behind the Bruges canal. Vendôme scoffed at the idea of Lille being besieged. He had the imprudence to give out that the Duke of Burgundy had orders to march to the assistance of whatever town the enemy might besiege ; but as for Lille, he said, he took it under his own protection,

and he would guarantee that the enemy would never commit themselves to so dangerous and difficult an enterprise. His boasts were faithfully repeated by his cabal at Court ; and in the meantime much precious time was lost, which might have been employed in making good the deficient supplies in the town. Nevertheless, Lille was invested on the 12th of August ; the news was brought to the King two days later by two couriers from Flanders ; and on the very same day another courier arrived from the army with a despatch stating that the enemy's object was believed to be Tournai, and that the army would march at once to cover that place. For a few days longer people tried to cast doubts on the truth of the news about Lille, but at last all faces grew longer. Flatterers, however, tried to make the best of it ; some went so far as to say that we had done without Lille for a long time, and could do without it again. Vaudemont and the cabal took a different line ; they asserted that such a mad undertaking on the part of the enemy was the very best thing that could have happened ; that their good fortune must have blinded them, or they would never have ventured so far into our territory in face of an army stronger than their own, to run the risk of failure before a place of such importance. This idle talk was not displeasing to the King ; but the Duchess of Burgundy was very much annoyed, and showed her anger to some ladies who ventured to talk to her in that strain.

On the 27th of August the King left Fontainebleau for Versailles. He announced that no pains would be spared to relieve Lille, which was one of his first personal conquests. He seemed surprised at the inactivity of his army, and sent two couriers in succession to Vendôme with positive orders to march to the relief of the place. The Duke of Burgundy, remembering all that had been said after Oudenarde, personally urged Vendôme to move, and took care to let the King know that it was no fault of his if the army remained in its present quarters. But it was all in vain ; Vendôme would not stir, and the King, growing as angry as it was possible for him to be with that favourite, had to send positive orders to his grandson to march without Vendôme, if he persisted in his disobedience. That left him no choice ; but when at last he did move, he did so as slowly as possible. He excused himself by the pretext that much time was required for the necessary arrangements ; which,

however, might have been made long before in Vendôme had acted with more foresight, or, rather, with more good-will. On the 30th of August a junction was effected with the army of the Duke of Berwick. This Marshal, his bâton adorned with the laurels of Almanza, had to pass the Caudine Forks like the rest of his colleagues : he was compelled to receive the parole and countersign from M. de Vendôme on the day of their junction. He made no attempt to conceal his indignation, refused to set foot in Vendôme's quarters, and announced publicly that, having handed over his army to the Duke of Burgundy, he had nothing more to do with it ; he should not interfere with any of the arrangements, but confine himself to attending on the Duke's person.

Never was there a more formidable army than ours after the junction. It consisted of 198 squadrons, besides 42 of dragoons, and 130 battalions, without counting the garri-sons of the towns and fortified posts, or the stragglers who had not rejoined since Oudenarde. Nearly all the regiments were old and distinguished ; the pick of the household troops were present, and all the military men about the Court ; there was abundance of money and supplies of all kinds ; the spirit of the troops was excellent, and there was a general desire for a battle. With this force Vendôme marched to Tournai ; Beauvau, the Bishop, ordered public prayers to be offered for the success of our arms ; and the Duke of Burgundy in person took part in a religious procession. The cabal and the libertines of the Court did not spare their sarcasms ; the most malignant explanations of his action were publicly circulated ; it was generally felt that his time would have been more usefully employed in deliberating on the plan of campaign, and that the performance of this urgent and important duty would have been equivalent to prayer. The next movements of the army did indeed require mature consideration ; but there was little consultation among the Generals, and what little there was led to angry and tumultuous debates. Vendôme seized all the authority ; and the young Prince, browbeaten and feebly supported, let him have his own way. Berwick disapproved of nearly all Vendôme's arrangements, but restricted himself to expressing his opinions privately to the Duke of Burgundy and d'O. The cabal did not spare him, but it spared the heir to the Crown incomparably less ; the designs against him were progressing towards their object with great strides.

On the 4th of September the army arrived at Mons-en-Peule, near the head waters of the Marck, and halted there for five days. Marlborough, with the covering army, had, in the meantime, taken up a strong position facing Vendôme, his right being at Pont-à-Marck, his left at Pont-à-Tressin. During this delay the excitement at Court was indescribable ; every one expected news of a decisive battle, it seemed as though it could not be avoided ; and in the miserable position of our affairs everybody hoped for one. The successful junction of the two armies seemed a certain omen of victory. The general uneasiness was increased by the absence of news ; no one could understand what kept back the couriers. The Prayers of Forty-eight Hours were offered up everywhere ; the Duchess of Burgundy spent her nights in the chapel, and her ladies were worn out with watching. All card-playing had ceased ; even conversation languished. It was shameful to see the alarm depicted in every face ; if a horse was heard passing quickly everybody ran to the window, without knowing why. Chamillart's apartments were besieged by footmen, who had to stand out in the street ; every one wanted to know the moment a courier arrived. Paris and the provinces were still more agitated, being farther from the centre of news ; the King had written to the Bishops ordering them, in terms suitable to the crisis, to offer up public prayers ; the impression which this caused may be readily imagined.

In the midst of all this alarm flattery did not fail to show itself in a thousand different shapes. Madame d'O went about expressing her pity for poor Prince Eugène, whose reputation and great actions were about to be tarnished in this mad undertaking ; enemy as he was, she said, she could not help regretting such an end to a glorious career. The cabal, more noisy than ever, guaranteed a victory ; and declared that M. de Vendôme could not fail to relieve Lille. I listened to this boasting with indignation ; I never believed that Vendôme meant to relieve the place ; his deliberate design, in my opinion, was to let it be taken, and cast all the blame of the failure on the Duke of Burgundy. One evening, while we were impatiently expecting the arrival of the courier from Mons-en-Peule, I was in Chamillart's rooms, conversing with five or six members of his family, among whom was La Feuillade. I was so tired of listening to all these boasts about impending battles and victories that I

suddenly lost patience ; and, interrupting Cani, I offered to bet him four pistoles that there would be no battle, and that Lille would be taken without any serious attempt to relieve it. Great was the astonishment of the company ; and many were the questions as to my reasons. I took good care not to tell them my real ones ; I merely replied that such was my opinion. Cani and his father declared to me that, not to speak of the ardent desire for a battle on the part of Vendôme and the whole army, positive and reiterated orders had been sent to relieve Lille at any cost ; they warned me that I was simply throwing away my four pistoles, for Cani was betting on a certainty. With the same coolness, which concealed the boiling emotions of my heart, I told them that I fully believed all they had told me, but my opinion was unchanged. At last Cani, laughing, and thanking me for the little present which I was so good as to make him, accepted the bet ; and we placed our stakes in Chamillart's hands. Never was a man more astonished ; he drew me aside to the other end of the room : " For God's sake," he said, " at least tell me why you are so positive ; for I repeat, on my word of honour, that I have despatched the most peremptory orders to attack the enemy, and there is no getting out of it." I put him off by alleging the time already wasted by Vendôme, which the enemy would no doubt have turned to good account, and so on. Notwithstanding our intimacy, I was not going to say more to a man so infatuated with Vendôme as he was, and so devoted to Vaudemont and his nieces.

There could not be a more trifling affair than this bet, made as it was in a private circle, in which I spent a portion of nearly every evening of my life. I soon discovered, however, that I could not have done a more imprudent thing. Next day my bet was the talk of the Court. One cannot live there without having enemies ; and, though there was nothing in my position to make me an object of jealousy, still I had a number of very influential friends ; and that, at my age, was enough to draw attention to me as a person of some importance. The Lorrainers had not forgiven me for several things which I have related, as well as others which I have not thought worthy of mention. M. du Maine did not like me ; nor, consequently, did Madame de Maintenon. I had expressed myself too freely after the battle of Oudenarde for Vendôme's cabal to forgive me ; they took this opportunity

to have their revenge. Perhaps the reserved manner in which I had expressed myself to Chamillart made the guilty parties understand to whom, and to what causes, I really imputed the impending loss of Lille ; but, however that may be, the fuss which arose about my bet was astonishing. I was accused of being a discontented person who found fault with everything and rejoiced over our disasters ; and care was taken that these accusations should reach the ears of the King. The old insinuations that I was possessed of superior cleverness and acquirements, which had already done my adversaries such good service in the matter of my selection for the embassy to Rome, were again used to poison his mind against me ; the consequence was that I fell into complete disgrace with him without having the slightest suspicion of it for more than two months afterwards. All I could do at the time was to wait till the fuss subsided, and hold my tongue for fear of something worse.

The long-expected courier from Mons-en-Peule arrived at last, but his despatches did but increase the general uneasiness. He brought news that Marlborough's position was extremely strong, and a Council of War had been held to decide whether it should be attacked in front, or whether an attempt should be made to throw supplies into Lille while the main body of our army held the enemy in check. All the Generals were in favour of the latter plan, which seemed to hold out the best prospect of success ; for in this way the enemy would be forced to consume their supplies, and bring up fresh convoys. Vendôme, however, had declared himself most strongly in favour of an immediate attack ; and the Duke of Burgundy, remembering the calumnies about Oudenarde, supported him. This courier was sent merely to obtain the King's final orders while all arrangements were being completed, and some additional artillery brought up from Douai under St. Hilaire. But he brought other news besides his despatches. It was rumoured that, M. de Vendôme having sent a small detachment across the Marck to reconnoitre, it was discovered that part of the enemy's position was not occupied ; that he had thereupon requested the Duke of Burgundy to push on to Pont-à-Marck, where he intended to cross with the whole army ; that all the Generals had disapproved of this movement as dangerous in the extreme if Marlborough should attack our army before it was completed ; that the Duke of Burgundy had

not expressed himself with sufficient decision, although General Cheladet had declared that he ought to break his sword and never wear one again if he let slip this opportunity; that the Duke of Berwick had maintained an obstinate and sulky silence; that finally, so much time was wasted in discussion that the occasion had been lost, and the army had marched to Orchies instead. It is incredible what a noise the cabal made over this story, and how they used it to heap insults on the Duke of Burgundy; their emissaries took care to repeat it everywhere; Paris and the provinces rang with it. As the officers of the army had learnt wisdom from experience, few letters came from Flanders, and those written laconically and with the utmost caution; so it was with extreme surprise that people learnt, when the campaign was over, that there was not a word of truth in the whole story, except that a detachment under General Artagnan had crossed the Marck to reconnoitre; but neither Vendôme nor any one else had ever thought of the whole army crossing at Pont-à-Marck.

The King was extremely angry at being again asked for orders after he had given them so often and so positively in favour of a battle; and, what was very unusual with him, he could not refrain from showing it. He said with some emotion that, since they wanted fresh orders, they should have them within three hours; and at the end of that time the same courier was sent back with more peremptory orders than ever for an immediate attack. The lie about the dispute concerning Pont-à-Marck was not the only one which was spread abroad. It was said, so positively and with such circumstantial detail as to close every one's mouth for the time being, that a Council of War had been held at Mons-en-Peule to decide whether the enemy should be attacked or not; that d'O and Gamaches had gone round to all the Generals, telling them that the safety of the Princes was of more importance than that of Lille; that the Generals, being intimidated in this way, Vendôme was alone in advocating an attack, for although the Duke of Burgundy had been in favour of it, he had yielded to the majority; that it was in consequence of this Council of War that Vendôme had again despatched a courier for orders; that he had spoken bitterly and angrily, and treated d'O and Gamaches with great harshness when it was over. This story was spread about with inconceivable rapidity, and

produced a most mischievous effect. It was said that d'O and Gamaches would never have ventured to act as they had done on their own responsibility, and that they had merely carried out a shameful commission imposed upon them by the Duke of Burgundy. A clamour arose as flattering to Vendôme as it was calumnious and mischievous to the young Prince ; even in the army itself, though no one there believed in this imaginary Council of War, the soldiers were persuaded by Vendôme's cabal that he was in favour of fighting, and that he was hindered by the Duke of Burgundy. It came to such a pitch that any officer passing the encampment was greeted with cries of "Vendômist" or "Burgundian," according to his supposed predilections ; or rather, according to the good or bad opinion the soldiers had formed of his courage. This feeling was as sedulously fomented as it had been secretly and effectually aroused by the cabal. It produced a most sinister effect on public opinion, not only in France, but even in foreign countries and in the hostile armies. I content myself with relating absolute and undeniable facts ; any comment on them would be superfluous, and I shall make none.

CHAPTER VIII

1708

Chamillart sent to Flanders—The cabal exalt the Duke of Berry at his brother's expense—Vendôme announces the approaching relief of Lille—The King's intense anxiety—Insensibility of Monseigneur—His memory for trifles—His mind poisoned against his eldest son—His open preference for the Duke of Berry—Insidious calumnies against the Duke of Burgundy—The Duchess and Madame de Maintenon powerless—Stubborn defence of Lille—A huge convoy of the Allies attacked at Wynendaal—The attack beaten off with heavy loss—The town of Lille surrenders, and Boufflers retires to the citadel—Vendôme captures Leffingen—I wish to retire to La Ferté—M. de Beauvilliers dissuades me, but eventually gives way—Death of Tréville—Of Marshal de Noailles—His character—Death of the Maréchal de Villeroy—Her character—Death of Count de Marsan—Of the Countess de Soissons—How she poisoned the Queen of Spain—Return of the Duke of Orleans—The Bishop of Chartres warns me that I have incurred the King's displeasure.

ON the 7th of September, the day of the arrival and departure of the courier, the Court was surprised by the disappearance of Chamillart; and on the evening of the 8th the army was no less astonished to see him arrive at headquarters at Mons-en-Peule. The cabal, always ready to turn any news, true or false, to good account, were jubilant on the subject of this journey. They gave out that Vendôme had sent in his resignation, and that Chamillart was despatched to implore him to withdraw it. The fact was, however, that the King, not doubting that after his reiterated orders a battle was imminent, wished Chamillart to be on the spot, whichever way the event turned; in order to relieve the Generals of all duties that were not purely military. However wise this precaution may have been, most people thought it ridiculous. M. le Duc, still jealous, and furious at having no command, said openly that Chamillart's journey undoubtedly gave universal satisfaction, for there was no one who had not almost died of laughing when he heard of it. Cani remained with the King during his father's absence, wrote despatches at his dictation, and

generally superintended the administration of current affairs ; it was considered remarkable that the King should entrust so much responsibility to a young man of his age.

The Duke of Berwick gave Chamillart a bed in his quarters, and the latter at once set to work to effect a reconciliation between Vendôme and Berwick. What cannot a Minister do, especially if he is a favourite of Royalty ? The two Dukes exchanged visits ; and Berwick consented to discuss military affairs with Vendôme, though he still declined any command. The Duke of Burgundy also made some advances to Vendôme, who was graciously pleased to meet him half-way. The greater part of the night was spent in consultations, to which the Duke of Berry was admitted, and he showed much sense and zeal. I may remark, in passing, that Vendôme and his cabal, throughout the campaign, lost no opportunity of exalting the Duke of Berry at the expense of his brother. He was the favourite son of Monseigneur, whom they were anxious to please ; they would have liked, if such a thing had been possible, to arouse the jealousy of the Duke of Burgundy ; and in any case they could make use of one brother to depreciate and ruin the other.

The day after Chamillart's arrival he accompanied the Princes, Vendôme, Berwick, and a small but carefully selected body of general officers, to reconnoitre the enemy's entrenchments. They rode along them from end to end, sometimes under a rather hot fire ; and the conclusion arrived at was that the position was too strong to be attacked with any hope of success. Vendôme alone maintained the contrary ; it was a cheap way of gaining the admiration of the troops and the public ; for he knew well enough that he would not be taken at his word, contrary to the unanimous opinion of the other Generals. His artful braggadocio did not impose upon Chamillart, who, being temporarily free from the influence of Vaudemont and his nieces, wrote to the King that such officers as had reconnoitred Marlborough's lines were opposed to an attack, and the position of affairs was such that they had been justified in asking for further orders. The King could not refuse to believe this statement coming from a Minister who was so great an admirer of Vendôme, and so little prejudiced in favour of the Duke of Burgundy.

The next week was spent by the army in marching and

counter-marching with a view to turn Marlborough's position. Some alarm was felt lest the enemy should attack us during these manœuvres; but his object was to cover the siege, and not commit himself to the chances of a battle, except on ground of his own choosing. On the 17th our army recrossed the Scheldt and took up a position, the right resting on Erennes, the left on the Saussoy, near Tournai. Chamillart returned to Versailles on the 18th, and gave the King a full report of all he had seen. He announced that Vendôme had great hopes of cutting off the enemy's convoys, and so forcing him to raise the siege.

The King stood in great need of these intervals of hope and consolation. Master as he was of his countenance and language, he felt acutely his growing inability to make a stand against his enemies. A deputation from the city of Paris having come to see him at Fontainebleau about the time when Lille was invested, it was remarked that he not only replied to their address with tenderness, but expressed his gratitude to his good town; and that his face changed as he pronounced the words—two things which had never happened before during the whole course of his reign. On the other hand, he had passing fits of cheerfulness and firmness of mind which were more surprising than edifying. During the time when the whole Court was anxiously expecting a battle at any moment, he used to drive people wild by going out shooting or walking every day; for news which arrived during his absence was not published till his return. Perhaps he wished to show that his anxiety was not sufficient to make him change his usual habits; or perhaps he really did not feel enough to give up his amusements.

As for Monseigneur, he seemed quite exempt from anxiety. While everybody was glued to the windows in painful expectation of the arrival of a courier with news of a battle, he used often to go off and dine at Meudon, saying that it would be quite time enough to hear the news when he returned. He was present when Chamillart brought to the King the despatch announcing that Lille was invested. When about half of it had been read Monseigneur went away; the King called him back to hear the remainder. He listened to the end, and then took his departure without saying a single word. He went to the rooms of the Princess of Conti, where he found Madame d'Espinoy, who had been

thinking of going to Lille, to see after her children's property in Flanders. "Which route would you take to go to Lille now, Madame?" said Monseigneur, laughing, as he came into the room; and thereupon told them that the siege was begun. The Princess of Conti was seriously annoyed by things like this. One day at Fontainebleau, during the crisis of this campaign, Monseigneur amused himself by reciting to her a long string of queer names of places in the forest. "Good God, Monseigneur!" she exclaimed, "what a memory you have! what a pity that it should be stored only with such rubbish as that!" It was his own fault if he did not feel the rebuke; but he never thought of turning it to profit.

Notwithstanding this insensibility, Vendôme's cabal, which kept him hemmed in, was completely successful in its designs on Monseigneur. He often spoke publicly in praise of the Duke of Berry, never mentioning the Duke of Burgundy except in disparagement. He said he could not understand him; for, having commanded armies himself, he had never thought of contradicting M. de Duras, M. de Lorge, or M. de Luxembourg, considering them more capable than himself. He had apparently forgotten Heilbron, where he had obstinately refused to attack Prince Louis of Baden, although urged to do so by M. de Lorge. The credulity with which he listened to those who surrounded him is beyond belief; I shall have occasion to give an instance of it presently. He swallowed greedily all that they offered him to poison his mind against his own son, and never got over the effects to his dying day. He did not like the Duke of Burgundy, nor those who had charge of his education; the too rigid piety of his eldest son was irksome to him; the Duke of Berry was fond of amusements, and he found him a more cheerful companion. The cabal took care to encourage this partiality; for the success of their schemes it was necessary to eradicate all vestige of affection for his eldest son from Monseigneur's mind.

When Chamillart returned, the cabal announced everywhere that Vendôme had always given his voice for fighting, and, if he had been allowed his own way, would have forced the enemy to raise the siege ignominiously; he had been given a free hand at last, they added falsely, but it was too late. All these praises of Vendôme were meant only to disparage the Duke of Burgundy. The old calumnies about

Oudenarde were sedulously repeated ; doubt was cast on the actions which had done the young Prince most honour in his former campaigns ; it was said that, after the taking of Brisach, foreseeing that he would be called upon for greater exertions before Landau, he had left the army with such precipitation that permission to do so had not reached him till he was well on his way towards France. Others, with professed moderation, took a more insidious and dangerous line. They cast no doubts on his courage, and carefully avoided bringing any odious accusations against him ; they professed to account for his shortcomings by his excessive piety. They said he was terrified by the thought of bloodshed, of the number of men who would be killed without confession, whose souls would be everlastingly lost, if he sanctioned an attack on the enemy ; he could not make up his mind to assume so heavy a responsibility in the sight of God, and therefore determined to throw it on the King ; this, they said, was the real cause of the despatch of the courier from Mons-en-Peule. They went on to throw doubts on the fitness of so scrupulous a Prince to command armies or to govern a kingdom ; and took good care to let their misgivings be spread as widely as possible.

They also took occasion to blame some of the Prince's amusements (indeed, they were too childish, and he sometimes indulged in them unseasonably) ; they made the most of some games of battledore and shuttlecock, some sittings at table which had been rather too much prolonged ; they cast ridicule on some trifling scientific experiments with wasps and other insects, fruits preserved in oil, grapes crushed while dreaming ; his discussions about anatomy, mechanics, and other abstract sciences ; especially on his too long and too frequent interviews with Father Martineau, his confessor. Here is a story which they circulated everywhere to prove the incapacity of the Prince, and bring him into contempt. When the Dukes of Vendôme and Berwick went with the Princes to reconnoitre Marlborough's lines, as I have related, Father Martineau had the curiosity to accompany them. So far the story was perfectly true ; but to it they appended a malicious falsehood, namely, that Father Martineau had been much distressed by the Duke of Burgundy's reluctance to attack ; and, fearing lest he might be thought to have instigated his opposition, had given out openly that, if the decision had depended upon him, the

enemy's position would have been attacked. This calumny, intended to cast ridicule on the Prince by showing his inferiority to his confessor in energy and military science, was spread broadcast. Father de la Chaise, hearing that Father Martineau was reported to have expressed the same opinion to him, thought it right to show the King what the confessor had written to him about this reconnaissance ; and there was not a single word in his letter bearing out what had been said. Father de la Chaise showed the letter to a good many people in hopes of stifling this falsehood ; nevertheless, the calumny produced the desired effect upon the Duke of Burgundy's reputation.

During all this time the King was entirely under the influence of his bastards and the valets of the household. They were always on the watch for opportunities to convey the most sinister impressions to his mind ; and he sometimes let fall remarks in conversation with them which showed how well they had succeeded. That was not all ; more than once he publicly expressed his anger and astonishment that the enemy's entrenched position should not have been attacked. The only person in the Court to whom he spoke on the subject of Flanders was Vaudemont ; if any one else, even the Princes of the Blood, attempted to join in the conversation it dropped immediately, the King usually making no answer ; Vaudemont alone laid down the law, and he knew well how to turn his opportunities to good account. The triumph of the cabal was complete ; what they had done after Oudenarde was child's play compared with what they did now. They had gained the ear of the public, in all ranks of society ; wit and fashion were on their side ; even the most cautious were carried away by the general feeling ; and it is the literal truth that it was hardly safe to take the part of the Duke of Burgundy even in his paternal house, while anything tending to exalt the Duke of Vendôme at his expense was sure of the approbation of the King and Monseigneur. The King did not venture, it is true, to express his displeasure openly if any one put in a word on behalf of his grandson ; but the Prince of Conti, who missed no opportunity of doing so, received a public reprimand for discussing the affairs of Flanders at the house of the Princess of Conti, his sister-in-law ; although at Versailles nothing else was talked about from morning till night !

M. de Beauvilliers and M. de Chevreuse joined with me in deploring what was going on; they often recalled my predictions, and confessed that I had foreseen only too clearly what would happen. But they saw nothing for it but to wait patiently for the end of the campaign, when many things would be cleared up; if I urged them to take more active steps they closed my mouth by quoting the opinion of Madame de Maintenon, who, as I have already mentioned, spoke freely to M. de Beauvilliers on this subject, and made no secret of her own impotence; and to this argument I could make no reply. I knew how matters stood in that quarter through the Duchess of Burgundy, who was in communication with me through Madame de Nogaret. The little time the Princess had to herself was spent entirely in weeping and writing; she really seemed indefatigable, and was full of courage and wise counsels. Madame de Maintenon sympathised most warmly with her; and was, moreover, extremely angry at finding, for the first time in her life, that certain persons had more influence with the King, so far as they were personally concerned, than she had herself.

All this time Boufflers was making a most vigorous defence in Lille. The bulk of his garrison consisted of raw recruits and stragglers from Oudenarde; but, by unremitting attention to their wants, he gained their affection, and acquired such influence over them that in a very short time he converted them into excellent troops, not inferior to the old regiments. He also enrolled a number of the citizens, who likewise became good soldiers. Though most careful to spare his troops any unnecessary fatigue or exposure, he was himself indefatigable; he saw everything with his own eyes, and was continually under fire. It is extraordinary that a man of his age should have been able to undergo so much; throughout the whole siege he did not spend three nights in bed. He was slightly wounded on several occasions, but concealed his injuries; at last he was stunned by a blow on the head, and had to be carried to his quarters. His house was immediately surrounded by soldiers, who insisted on his remaining there till he was completely recovered; when he again showed himself to the garrison their delight was indescribable. A regular journal of this memorable siege would be required to do justice to the skill and bravery of the defence. Every foot of ground was disputed; the outworks were captured repeatedly, and the enemy again

driven out by vigorous sorties. The garrison was running short of powder ; Boufflers contrived to send word to the relieving army, and the Chevalier de Luxembourg was ordered to carry in supplies. He marched from Douai on the night of the 28th of September, with 2,000 cavalry, armed with muskets instead of carbines, each man carrying 60 pounds of powder on his horse. The enterprise was bravely carried out and completely successful, although two regiments of infantry, which were to have accompanied the force, were unable to get through ; in this way the garrison was supplied with 2,000 good muskets and more than 100,000 pounds of powder. Our loss was very small. The Chevalier de Luxembourg received great praise for this vigorous exploit, and was made a Lieutenant-General on the spot. Between the 5th and 13th of October the enemy made repeated assaults ; and, though repulsed several times with heavy loss, succeeded at last in establishing themselves on the covered way. On the 16th the Chevalier de Luxembourg led a great sortie, and destroyed some of the enemy's works, killing many men, but could not succeed in dislodging them from the covered way.

Vendôme, after many fruitless attempts to out-manceuvre Marlborough, now directed his attention entirely to preventing the enemy from bringing up supplies for the besieging army. The commandant at Nieupoort was ordered to open the sluices there ; and the inundation forced the enemy's convoys, coming from Ostend, to make a wide detour by Plassendal. It was known that an enormous convoy was on its way to the besiegers ; and the Count de la Mothe, with a force consisting of forty battalions and fifty squadrons, was sent to cut it off. Berwick was at Bruges, where this force was assembled, and he was urged by the principal officers present to take the command himself ; but he replied that he would not deprive an officer, who had served for many years, of the chance of obtaining the bâton of a Marshal of France ; finally, he put an end to all remonstrances by producing express orders from the Court entrusting the command to the Count de la Mothe. The latter owed his appointment to the influence of his cousin, the Duchess de Ventadour, who was a friend of Chamillart's. He was a highly honourable man, brave and ambitious, who had served assiduously all his life, winter and summer, and had often commanded small detached corps ; at the

same time, of all our Generals, he was perhaps the dullest, most obstinate, and most incapable. The enemy had formed an entrenched post at Winendal to cover the advance of their immense convoy. La Mothe could think of nothing better than to attack this post, and did so with vigour; but Cadogan's defence was more vigorous still. La Mothe's troops gave way; Cadogan sallied out and attacked in his turn; and, though his troops were not more than half as numerous as La Mothe's, he beat him completely, and drove him back in confusion.¹ In the meantime the convoy arrived safely in Prince Eugène's camp, to the great joy of the besiegers, who were destitute of everything.

This disaster caused great disappointment at Court, where every one had been rejoicing over the unfortunate plight of the besieging force, unable either to continue the siege for want of supplies, or to retreat without being attacked by Vendôme's army. La Mothe came in for a good deal of blame; but the influence which had obtained the command for him was sufficiently powerful to protect him, and to persuade the King that he had been unlucky rather than unskilful. M. de Vendôme now took up a position between Moordick on the right, and the Bruges-Plassendal canal on the left, in hopes of preventing convoys from reaching the enemy from Ostend and Sluys. Marlborough occupied a corresponding position at Rousselaar, threatening to attack Vendôme in order to secure the passage of the convoys, which were greatly hampered by the inundations. Vendôme endeavoured to divert the enemy's attention by detached enterprises. He had a secret understanding with some of the inhabitants of Menin, and thought it would be easy to surprise the place. The command of the expedition, which carried with it certain promotion in the event of success, was given to a nephew of Albergotti, of the same name, and a Brigadier-General. Luxury had corrupted our armies, especially in Flanders. Cold meals at a halt were only for common soldiers; the officers' tables were served with as much elegance and refinement as in the best houses at Paris. This caused so many delays that Albergotti's force reached Menin four hours after the

¹ This was a very brilliant action. The Allies were under the command of General Webb; Cadogan only arrived after the French had given way. The loss of the Allies, according to Mr. Fortescue, was under 1,000; that of the French over 3,000. There were no entrenchments at Wynendaal.

appointed time ; the enemy had got wind of the design, and were on their guard ; Albergotti had nothing for it but to retreat. Any one else would have been ruined ; but he had powerful backers, and nothing more was heard of the matter. Shortly afterwards his uncle attempted to wipe out this failure by surprising Ath ; but, like his nephew, he arrived too late, and had to retire hastily. He was much blamed by the troops, but received no reprimand from his General or from the Court. While the army was thus employed in wild-goose chases in all directions, Vendôme was besieging Leffingen ; the capture of which would, he said, prevent Prince Eugène from receiving supplies by canal. According to him the garrison consisted of 3,000 men ; in reality, as will shortly appear, it was not more than half that strength.

In spite of its heroic defence, Lille could not hold out much longer. On the 20th and 21st of October the enemy made three new breaches, drained the ditch, and completed an underground gallery leading to the foot of one of the breaches. Powder, food, and supplies of all sorts were nearly exhausted ; and at last Boufflers, with the consent of his brave garrison, determined to beat the *chamade*. The enemy granted all the conditions he asked for, the principal one being that he was to be allowed four days to retire into the citadel with such troops and supplies as he chose to take. The capitulation was signed on the 23rd of October, after two months of open trenches. By a special clause it was ordered that the capitulation should be referred to the Duke of Burgundy in person, and should hold good or not as he thought fit. Marshal de Boufflers had expressly stipulated that he was not to be subordinate to Vendôme, nor receive any kind of orders from him. Coëtquen, who took the despatch to the young Prince at the camp of Tournai, found him engaged in a game of battledore and shuttlecock ; he had already heard the sad tidings. It is unfortunately the fact that he did not interrupt his game ; and that, while he was finishing it, Coëtquen went and talked to any one he pleased. This manner of receiving the news was severely criticised ; it was with good reason much resented by the army, and the hostile cabal did not fail to use it as a fresh weapon against the Prince. Boufflers sent Tournefort to the King with a despatch giving a detailed account of the defence, in which he begged him to repay

the money which he had been obliged to borrow from the citizens. He decided to take with him into the citadel 6,000 men, including a few dragoons; all the soldiers destined for this service were informed that they were at liberty to refuse it if they wished, but not a single man availed himself of the offer. The Marshal himself was the last man to enter the citadel; he was delayed for some hours while making final arrangements, and the soldiers became uneasy and began to murmur. As soon as he showed himself among them there was a most flattering demonstration of their joy; and they all expressed their determination to do their best under a leader who took such care of them and showed them such a good example. The citadel was closely invested on the 26th of October.

On the previous day Vendôme had ordered Leffingen to be assaulted sword in hand. It was carried without much difficulty and with little loss on our side. The garrison, consisting of about 1,500 men, mostly English under an English Colonel, were all taken prisoners. Vendôme, as usual, made the most of his triumph; and the King, still unshaken in his partiality for him, did him the favour of promoting the Chevalier de Roye, the bearer of the news, to be a Colonel in the cavalry.

I had intended to go to La Ferté very soon after the return of the Court from Fontainebleau, to make the most of the remainder of the fine weather. Some of my principal friends tried to dissuade me from doing so while important news was hourly expected from Flanders; but I felt quite convinced that nothing would happen there, and that Lille would not be relieved. Moreover, I began to feel that I could no longer bear the insolent triumph of the cabal; I was longing to get away from the Court, when the Duke of Beauvilliers asked me if I would not sacrifice my inclinations for the sake of the Duke of Burgundy, and remain at least a few days longer. This appeal disarmed me; I promised to stay till he should himself restore my liberty, and I begged him not to try my courage too far, for the feeling of helplessness in face of all these criminal intrigues was too much for me. He promised to release me before long, and also to tell the Duke of Burgundy what violence I was putting on my inclinations for his sake. But my continued stay turned out badly for myself, and was perfectly useless. I had incurred the hatred of the cabal;

for, except myself, they had contrived to silence all those who were most thoroughly convinced of their wickedness ; I hardly like to say it, but I was almost the only person bold enough to give advice in opposition to them, or to let the truth be heard ; they could not feel quite at ease while any opposition remained, and the truth was the more odious to them because they had so nearly succeeded in stifling it. Not content with renewing the clamour about the bet which I have mentioned, they had recourse to a fresh artifice ; if they were not ashamed of its clumsiness it was because they had long since lost all sense of shame. They put about the report that I had said more ill-natured things about the Duke of Burgundy than anybody. As every one knew how warmly I had taken his part people only laughed at this calumny ; and I myself treated it with contempt. In the end, however, it put the finishing touch to my longing for a healthier and more tranquil atmosphere in my own home ; and M. de Beauvilliers let me go. I will avail myself of the break to mention some events which I have hitherto postponed so as not to interrupt my relation of the affairs in Flanders.

Tréville died at Paris about the time of the investment of Lille ; I have already described him sufficiently. An unwarlike personage, he had passed some portion of his life as a courtier, mixing in the very best society ; became pious and retired from the world, then came back to it to a certain extent, surrounded by a small but select and witty circle. During the last few years of his life, however, he had lived in more complete retirement, occupied almost entirely with his spiritual welfare. He was well off and unmarried. His father had commanded one of the two companies of Musketeers.

Soon afterwards a death took place which ought to have furnished the Court with matter for serious reflections ; that of Marshal de Noailles. He was an enormously fat man ; a great eater ; his table was always plentifully and delicately provided ; but it was only for his own family and a very small number of friends. His father and mother had both held court offices, and had been intimate with Cardinal Mazarin and the Queen-Mother ; he had, therefore, been born in the midst of the Court, and heavy, coarse, and dull though he was, he had thoroughly imbibed the court spirit. There never was a man so exclusive, so in-

accessible, so mysterious, or so completely wrapped up in court matters ; so servile to persons in power, or so haughty and insolent to them as soon as he had the chance. He might be seen any day, when a Duke and Captain of the Guard, publicly bearing the train of Madame de Montespan like a page, although the Queen herself never had her train carried by any one but the officer on duty about her person. When the King, the idol before whom he burnt all his incense, became religious, he made a parade of the most profound piety ; communicated regularly every week, sometimes oftener ; and never missed High Mass or Vespers, except when prevented by his court duties. For all that, it was generally believed that he had not given up women, and that he used to have secret pleasure parties, at which they were present, with his intimate friend Rouillé du Coudray, a notorious profligate.

With all this, he was neither malevolent nor ill-bred ; and, though he disliked straining his influence, he used it not unfrequently to do people a good turn. The King liked him because of his extreme servility, and also because his ability was much inferior to his own ; Madame de Maintenon also liked him. In this his position was just the reverse of his wife's ; they both disliked her and were afraid of her cleverness, boldness, and talent for intrigues. She ruled her husband, her children, and her relations, with absolute authority ; managed their business for them ; arranged their court affairs ; and all with such a cheerful manner and absence of fuss that no one would have supposed she had anything to do at all. By sheer cleverness and strength of will she made the King and Madame de Maintenon do anything she pleased, never giving in for a first snub or rebuff ; and it was just the same with the Duchess of Burgundy. As for the Princesses, the Ministers, and persons in office, she managed them completely, and that without the slightest servility. She was a dignified woman, generous and munificent, wrapped up in her children, proud of her name and family ; very capable of friendship ; she had many friends and deserved to have more. She did not say all that she thought, but she never said anything which she did not believe to be true ; she was essentially good-natured, kind, and even-tempered ; outspoken so far as is compatible with prudence in a Court. It was not advisable to tread on her toes ; if any one did so she spoke her mind freely, no matter

who it was ; but she never bore malice. She still lives at the age of eighty-seven, full of wit and vigour, like a patriarch among her numerous descendants ; very rich and very liberal ; religious, so far as lies in her power ; always on the move ; the delight of her friends, who are still numerous ; and she still retains the jesting manner which she always found so successful even in the most serious affairs.

Marshal de Noailles never got over his resignation of office in favour of his son ; it made an intolerable void in his life, though he still remained at Court and was treated with the same distinction as before. At first the guards used to turn out when he passed, but the King heard of it, and was not pleased ; so the practice was dropped. This was so mortifying to the Marshal that he never would pass the guard-room ; when he wanted to go to his daughter, Madame de Guiche, or elsewhere, he always went round by the courtyards. His illness was very short and sudden ; he died in his arm-chair at five o'clock in the evening of the 2nd of October, surrounded by his family and friends in the presence of the Duchess of Burgundy (who liked any sort of excitement) and of all the King's daughters, who came running in, and saw him expire. To the great grief of his brother the Cardinal, the Holy Sacrament was for some time in the room, but the dying man was unable to receive it. The Duke de Noailles, who was in command of the troops in Roussillon and had nothing to do there, returned to the Court very soon afterwards.

Saint-Mars, Governor of the Bastille, died about the same time at a great age. Bernaville, who had served under him as Lieutenant-Governor, succeeded him in this extremely confidential post.

On the 20th of October the Maréchale de Villeroy died at Paris after a short illness, which had not appeared serious. She was sister to the Duke de Brissac, my brother-in-law ; and was very rich, having been left a large fortune by her mother, a sister of the Duke de Retz. In her early married life she did not get on very well with her husband ; but Marshal de Villeroy the elder, who had more sense than his son and had gone through the same experience with his own wife, prevented them from coming to an open quarrel. They lived together, however, rather on a footing of mutual forbearance than of affection. In person she was extremely

small, with no bosom ; but in other respects so enormously stout that she could hardly move. Her arms were thicker than most people's thighs, with small wrists, and the prettiest, tiniest of hands at the end of them. In face she was exactly like a great parrot, with prominent eyes which saw nothing ; she walked also like a parrot. Although her appearance was so far from being imposing, there never was a more imposing woman. She was very haughty ; but, nevertheless, possessed that old-fashioned, dignified, yet discriminating politeness which has become so rare, and is so very flattering to its objects. Her ability was great ; no one had more sense, nor sounder judgement ; and she had a style of conversation quite peculiar to herself, very witty, and, when she chose, very amusing ; but always in a dignified way. She was an excellent adviser, and a most faithful and trustworthy friend ; with all her pride, she was very easy to get on with, and excellent company. But she was fastidious in her choice of friends, and everybody did not suit her.

She always respected herself, and without any effort commanded the respect of others. The King and Madame de Maintenon were afraid of her, and she never made the slightest attempt to gain their favour, although her whole life was passed at Versailles, where she always had a sort of Court of her own, quite independently of her husband, whether he was present or absent. The absurdity of his airs annoyed her. Very often he would take off his wig when alone with her in private ; she never said anything, but she did not like it at all. She had sense enough to feel anything but overjoyed when he was sent to Italy ; she was afraid of a reverse of fortune, and spoke quite freely to me about it ; though she would sometimes scold me, in a half-jesting manner, for not liking the Marshal. She was beside herself with grief when he was taken prisoner. I saw her during the first days, when her door was shut to all but her most intimate friends. With her sound judgement she was not to be consoled by the marks of kindness which the King showered on the Marshal, nor by all his messages to herself. When her husband came back she was much grieved by his obstinacy in rejecting the good advice¹ of the Chevalier de Lorraine, which I mentioned in its proper place. But the defeat of Ramillies, with all its consequences, was a crushing blow to her. For some time past she had

¹ To retire from active service as a soldier, and seek to enter the Council.

begun to turn to devotion ; henceforth she did so more and more. She fell into the wrong hands ; Father Poulinier, who afterwards became Abbot of St. Geneviève, was a saint ; but a saint of a coarse and rough type, without the slightest knowledge of the world. She was an extremely sensitive person, and her conversation was so delightful that it was impossible to tear oneself away from her. Father Poulinier condemned her to absolute silence with regard to her husband's misfortunes ; and also on the subject of Chamillart, whom she considered to have aggravated them. She obeyed him so faithfully that she not only abstained from alluding to these subjects herself, but if any intimate friend allowed himself a little liberty with regard to them she would at once change the conversation ; and, if he persisted, would, in a pleasant manner, impose silence.

Like all the Cossés, she was insanely proud of her birth, and often made her children feel their inferiority ; her husband, too, sometimes. She would, however, sometimes tell me, in a laughing way, when we were alone together, that the family of Villeroy was not quite so bad as I made it out to be ; at which I laughed too. After Ramillies she began to withdraw herself from the world, and very soon did so altogether. This woman, accustomed to the very best society, unable to read or even to move about, took to spending seven or eight months at Villeroy, entirely by herself ; and when she was at Paris her door was shut to everybody. Her best friends were never received unless she sent for them specially ; and that was not very often. She denied herself so many topics that her charming conversation became heavy ; and, as she was equally rigorous in forbidding them to others, one did not know how to entertain her. Her bad sight prevented her from working, and she had long given up play, of which she had been extremely fond ; making a pretext of her blindness. Her life was passed in her arm-chair, either in prayer or in listening to religious books which her servants read to her. I often told her that she was killing herself ; she used to turn it off with a jest, and in her usual pleasant way would say a few words, very much in season, about religion and repentance. But what I said was only too true. This unnatural sort of life, so different from what she had been accustomed to, killed her in two or three years. Her Father Poulinier never would believe that anything was the matter

with her ; he would not take the trouble to visit her during her last illness, and she received all the Sacraments without him. A short time before she died she asked for me, forgetting that I was at La Ferté ; I was extremely grieved by her death, and at having been absent. She died the death of the righteous, in possession of all her faculties, and in an admirable frame of mind. She was only sixty years old.

The Countess de Beuvron soon followed her. Her name was Rochefort, of a good family in Guyenne ; she was seventy years of age when she died, and it was easy to see that she had been beautiful. Her husband was the Count de Beuvron, whom I have mentioned in connection with the death of Monsieur's first wife ; she had long been a widow, and had no children. She was a clever woman, with much knowledge of the world, and very good company. Madame was her great and constant friend ; when they were not together she never let a day pass without writing to her. The intrigues of the Palais-Royal had separated Madame de Beuvron from Madame, who had been forbidden by Monsieur to see her or the Maréchale de Clerembault, as I have already mentioned ; but she took them both to live with her after his death. Madame de Beuvron was a very great friend of mine. She was a woman with a sharp tongue, with a nature far removed from anything base ; tolerably well informed, and a great lover of play.

Very soon afterwards died the Count de Marsan, younger brother of the Grand Equerry and the late Chevalier de Lorraine ; but he had nothing of their dignified bearing, nor anything of the wit of the Chevalier ; neither of his brothers had any respect for him. He was an extremely short, stumpy man, with nothing to recommend him but courage, knowledge of the ways of society, a great deal of politeness, and a sort of small talk which pleased women, at whose expense he lived as much as he could. The amount of money he got out of the Maréchale d'Aumont is incredible. She wanted to marry him and give him all her wealth, at the expense of her family ; but her son got her put into a convent by the King's order, and had her well guarded. In her rage she buried an immense sum of money in a place where she said no one would find it ; and indeed the Duke d'Aumont has never succeeded in doing so, though he hunted for it high and low. No man about the Court was so disgracefully

servile as M. de Marsan to any one in office or in favour, Ministers, mistresses, or valets ; or so shamefully greedy of money. He had married Madame d'Albret, an heiress, who gave him all her wealth ; and lived on very bad terms with her. He afterwards married Madame de Seignelay, Mattignon's sister, who also brought him a fortune. He got a great deal out of men of business, and as much as he could out of the Contróllers-General. I have mentioned a rich man named Thevenin, in connection with a legacy which he left to the Chancellor de Pontchartrain and which the latter refused to accept. During his last illness, which lasted a long time, Marsan waited upon him like a servant ; and was taken in at last, for his infamous servility brought him nothing. He had better luck with Bourvalais, another celebrated financier, whom he used to call the mainstay of the State ; to which some one replied, on one occasion, that he was so indeed, just as the rope is the mainstay of a man who has been hanged ! Marsan and his brother-in-law Mattignon made immense profits by speculating in the public funds in the time of Chamillart, to whom and his surroundings he paid the most servile court. The Grand Equerry, whose pride was offended at this, used to call him the Chevalier de la Proustière, and said that he employed the Abbé de la Proustière's wig-maker to curry favour with him. This Abbé de la Proustière was a worthy, foolish sort of man, first cousin to Chamillart, who looked after his private expenditure and managed his household ; he was honest and disinterested, but thoroughly incapable.

M. de Marsan, with all his airs of an old gallant with the ladies, and his servility to people when he thought he could get anything out of them, used to pay the silliest and most insipid compliments. He was not ashamed to address Madame de la Feuillade as "my beautiful fat one" : she was a very good woman, but more of a Maritornes than Don Quixote's lady herself. She used to be put quite out of countenance by it, and other people laughed. In the end this low-minded, greedy man, who had always lived on what he could extract from the Church and from women, from the widow and the orphan, was literally starved to death. He had an attack of paralysis of the throat ; and, though otherwise perfectly healthy in mind and body, could swallow nothing. He suffered tortures for more than two months ; till at last not a drop of water could pass down his throat,

and he was unable to speak. He used to make his servants eat in his presence, and used to smell their food in his torment of hunger. In this state he died, at the age of sixty-two, leaving two sons by his second wife.

For the last six or seven months an intrigue had been going on at Rome which the Abbé de Polignac contrived to turn to his own profit. The Bishop of Munster died ; and there were two candidates for the vacant see, namely, the Bishop of Osnabruck, brother of the Duke of Lorraine, and the Baron de Metternich. The Prince of Lorraine had the support of the Emperor ; but Metternich was elected. The Emperor was very angry, and appealed to Rome ; but, as the election of Metternich had been perfectly regular and canonical, the Pope dared not upset it. The Emperor then claimed a Cardinal's hat for the Prince of Lorraine ; to which His Holiness agreed, though very reluctant to make Cardinals ; this, of course, gave the Kings of France and Spain a claim to nominate two more. The Pope, who liked the Abbé de Polignac, suggested that he should be appointed, as Cardinal de Trémouille had been, on the joint nomination of the two Crowns. This, however, met with opposition both from our King and from the Emperor ; the King had promised Madame de Soubise that his next nomination should be given to her son ; and the Emperor, whose arrogance was raised to a high pitch by the success of his Grand Alliance, declared that, if Spain had anything to do with Polignac's promotion, he claimed another Hat for the Archduke, as King of Spain. The claim was absurd, for the Archduke was not King of Spain ; certainly not at Rome, where Philip V was recognised and had an Ambassador. The end of it was that no promotion took place at this time ; but the Abbé de Polignac had recourse to another device. He had always been on good terms with the Court of St. Germain ; he now applied to the King of England for his nomination. This right was almost the only mark of regal authority remaining to that unfortunate Sovereign ; and Rome could not very well oppose the wishes of a Prince who had sacrificed everything for the sake of his religion. The King of England was glad to make a nomination which would be equally agreeable to the Court of France and to the Pope ; it was therefore agreed that Polignac should be appointed on his nomination at the next promotion.

The Count de Fiesque died about this time, He was

the last representative of the elder branch of that illustrious Genoese family which has produced so many Popes, Cardinals, and persons of distinction. One of his ancestors conspired to make himself sovereign of the Republic, but he was drowned just as his conspiracy was about to be crowned with success ; whereupon the family was banished and took refuge in France. This Count de Fiesque was a very honourable man, witty, with a cultivated mind ; he had been gallant in his younger days ; he sang well, and when he chose, which was not often, could write charming verses, with a simple and natural turn of expression. He made a song about Béchameil and his entry into his property at Nointel, in which he hit off Béchameil's character so funnily that it has never been forgotten. The King heard of it, and made Fiesque sing it to him one day out hunting ; and he nearly died of laughter. He had not served much, but had gone through a few campaigns as aide-de-camp to the King ; and when the Doge of Genoa came to France the King, pleased at having an opportunity to mortify the Genoese and do a good turn to Fiesque at their expense, made them pay him 100,000 crowns on the pretext of some old claims. Fiesque was a man who hated any kind of constraint, and cared nothing for fortune or advancement. He was always sought after by the best society. I have mentioned the strange insult offered to him by M. le Duc, who sought to make amends afterwards, and waited upon him like a servant in his last illness.

Bréauté, his cousin, followed him two months later. He was a very tall, stout man ; his father was nephew to the Bréauté who was so famous for his duel, or rather battle between twenty-two Frenchmen and twenty-two Spaniards. They come of a very ancient and illustrious family in Normandy. This Bréauté made a rather unworthy marriage, and ruined himself completely ; partly, it was said, by practising alchemy. He lost his wife and only son, and then retired from the world, devoting himself to piety and good works. It was he who took up the famous case of Langlade, who had died while serving in the galleys, having been condemned for a theft committed in the house of the Count de Montgommery, where he was living. Bréauté proved Langlade's innocence, rehabilitated his memory, and procured a good marriage for his only daughter. While practising alchemy he had learned the secret of some remedies

which he used to make himself. Latterly it would seem that he did not make them properly ; for, though in robust health, he died very suddenly, after having taken one of them for some slight ailment.

Two Abbés, very unlike each other, also died at this time. One was the Abbé de la Rochefoucauld, uncle to the Duke, though his junior by a month. In the days when the Duke de la Rochefoucauld was poor the Abbé shared what little money he had with him, and their friendship remained close and unbroken all their lives. The Abbé lived with M. de la Rochefoucauld, which gave him a certain consideration, even in the King's eyes ; and so he spent all his life at Court, though never really of it. He was a thorough gentleman, the noblest and most upright of men, but also one of the most foolish. In appearance he was exactly like a village priest. He was passionately fond of hunting, and never missed a meet ; so that he had got the nickname of Abbé Tally-ho. He never took holy orders, but had many rich abbey, which M. de la Rochefoucauld procured for him.

The other was that Abbé de Chateauneuf who was sent to Poland, to repair the mischief done by the blunders of the Abbé de Polignac. He was a man of great knowledge and ability, much sought after in the best society.

The Countess de Soissons also died about this time at Brussels, in poverty and neglect ; despised by everybody, and treated with scant respect by Prince Eugène, her celebrated son. No position could be more splendid than hers at the time of the King's marriage ; she governed the Court, and the King was always in her apartments, till her fear of having to share her dominion with his mistresses led her to commit an act of folly for which she was banished, together with Vardes and the Count de Guiche. The story is too old and too well known to be repeated here. She made her peace after a time, and returned to Court, but found herself in a very different position, and soon afterwards she was so compromised in the affair of the woman Voysin, who was burnt alive for poisoning and sorcery, that she fled the country and took refuge in Flanders. The sudden death of her husband long before had given rise to suspicions, but as it was in the days of her favour they were expressed only in whispers. From Flanders she went to Spain. The Queen, Monsieur's daughter, was childless ;

and she had acquired the esteem and affection of the King, her husband, to such a degree that the Court of Vienna feared lest she should detach Spain from the Grand Alliance formed against France. The Count de Mansfeldt was the Emperor's Ambassador at Madrid, and he became very intimate with the Countess de Soissons soon after her arrival there.

The Queen, who loved everything French, was very anxious to see the Countess ; but the King, who had heard a good deal about her and had received repeated information that there was a plot to poison the Queen, was with difficulty brought to consent to their meeting. In the end, however, the Countess was allowed to come occasionally to the Queen's apartments in the afternoon. The King had asked the Queen, as a favour, never to eat or drink anything which he had not previously tasted, for he well knew that they did not wish to poison him. But the weather was hot, and the Queen asked for some milk, which is scarce at Madrid ; the Countess de Soissons offered to procure her some, iced. It is said that it was prepared at the Ambassador's house. She brought the iced milk ; the Queen drank it, and died very shortly afterwards. The Countess did not wait for the event ; everything was prepared for her journey ; she fled to Germany with such precipitation that, although the King at once gave orders for her arrest, it was impossible to overtake her. She afterwards retired to Brussels ; I think I have already mentioned that, so long as Philip V was in possession of that place, Marshals de Boufflers and de Villeroy, and all Frenchmen of distinction, were strictly forbidden to see her. The Duchess of Burgundy went into mourning for a week ; but the King did not, nor did the Court ; although the Count de Soissons' mother, the Princess of Carignan, had been a Princess of the Blood, and the last of her branch.

The King, who was beginning to take to Desmarets and thought he would stand greatly in need of his services, made him a Minister about this time ; like all his predecessors in the same office. Desmarets had two daughters married, one to Grosbriant, the other to Bercy, Intendant of Finance. Soon after he became Minister he made a very different marriage for his third daughter, it was with the Marquis de Béthune-Orval, who would in all probability become Duke de Sully ; for the Duke had no children, and his brother,

the Chevalier de Sully, was believed to be privately married in such a way that he was not likely to have any. This M. de Béthune was a man hardly known at Court, and had served very little with the army ; he was rich, but involved in an ocean of lawsuits, of which he was said to be very fond. The King wished to give 200,000 livres to Desmarets' daughter, his usual wedding-gift to daughters of Ministers ; but Desmarets refused to accept it in the embarrassed state of the public finances. The King then offered a pension of 12,000 livres, but Desmarets did not wish it to exceed 8,000 ; eventually it was fixed at 10,000.

The Duke of Orleans arrived on the 6th of December, and met with the reception which his laborious and successful campaign deserved. But all the same he had not regained the good-will of Madame des Ursins and Madame de Maintenon.

I have anticipated some trifling events of the end of this year, as I postponed some before, so as not to interrupt my narrative of the affairs of Flanders ; to which it is time to return. But before doing so I must mention that soon after I went to La Ferté I received a letter from the Bishop of Chartres, written from St. Cyr, in which he told me that certain persons had been trying to set the King and Madame de Maintenon against me, and had succeeded to some degree. I wrote back by a special messenger asking him for something more precise than this vague warning, and furnishing him with information as to my bet about Lille and other things which I knew were used against me, so that he might know how to defend me in the meantime. I was not surprised at what he told me ; but I was puzzled how to get more definite information, for the Bishop had returned to Chartres when my messenger reached St. Cyr, and afterwards he would not tell me anything more. Owing to this affair my head was kept under water for more than a year ; how I came to the surface again shall be related at the proper time. I did not stay much longer at La Ferté ; I was anxious to be at Court for the return of the Duke of Orleans ; and, still more, for that of the Duke of Burgundy.

CHAPTER IX

1708

Vendôme attempts to dispute the passage of the Scheldt—Marshal Berwick disapproves of this plan—Vendôme's braggadocio—The Allies cross the Scheldt—A sharp action—Chamillart, with the assent of Madame de Maintenon, conceals the bad news from the King—The Princes ordered to return to Court—I return myself, to meet the Duke of Orleans—Return of the Duke of Burgundy—Scene in Madame de Maintenon's room—Description of her apartments—The Duke of Burgundy's reception by the King and Monseigneur—Marked preference shown for the Duke of Berry—The Duke of Burgundy makes a full report to the King—Mademoiselle Choin unites with Madame de Maintenon in opposition to Vendôme and Chamillart—Gamache—His witty criticism of the two Princes—Surrender of the citadel of Lille—Return of Vendôme—Signs that he was losing ground—Return of Marshal Boufflers—The King showers rewards upon him—Marshal Berwick openly criticises Vendôme—Uneasiness of the cabal—Chamillart proposes a scheme for the recapture of Lille—He imprudently attempts to keep it from Madame de Maintenon—The King reveals the secret to her—Her surprise and anger.

AFTER the capitulation of the town of Lille there was much discussion as to the best course for our Generals to adopt ; for although Vendôme boasted that the capture of Leffingen would cut off the enemy's supplies, most people looked upon the fall of the citadel as merely a question of time. Vendôme had made our Government believe that the enemy's retreat could be cut off by taking up the line of the Scheldt ; quite regardless of the difficulty, not to say impossibility, of holding a line strung out for forty leagues along the river. Berwick, by no means disposed to submit to Vendôme's authority, did not conceal his disapproval of this project ; a violent dissension again broke out between them, in which the Duke of Burgundy sided with Berwick so far as he dared. Thereupon the King decided to send Chamillart to headquarters, and the two Generals submitted their respective plans to him. He tried in vain to reconcile them, listened to their arguments, and discussed the matter with them fully on several occasions. So it fell to this

financier, this man of the gown and pen, to be sole arbiter between two Generals, and to prescribe a most important and delicate strategical operation ; although he had never seen anything of war except during these two brief visits to Flanders. The plan he finally chose was a compromise, and, relying on its being carried into execution, he started on his return journey ; but he had hardly gone thirty leagues from the frontier when Vendôme returned to his original scheme of taking up the line of the Scheldt, and proceeded to carry it out without listening to anybody. Chamillart, more infatuated with Vendôme than ever, treated the Duke of Burgundy with very little deference during his stay with the army, and spoke slightly of him when making his report to the King. This report was made in the presence of Madame de Maintenon. She listened to it without saying a word, but immediately informed the Duchess of Burgundy. The fury of the Princess and the indignation of Madame de Maintenon can be easily imagined, both of them having already so many reasons to be displeased with Chamillart.

The first result of Chamillart's return was that the Duke of Berwick was ordered to go at once to the Rhine and assume the chief command there, although the campaign was at an end, and the troops were about to go into winter-quarters. He was not even allowed to visit the Court on his way ; they were too much afraid of what he might say to the King, and in society. He felt the blow which Vendôme had given him, but obeyed without a word. He had not been on the Rhine a fortnight when orders arrived for his army to go into winter-quarters.

As soon as Berwick had started Vendôme wrote to the King that now his hands were free, and he felt so sure of preventing the enemy from crossing the Scheldt that he would answer for it with his head. His flatterers at Court were delighted ; his former boasts about the relief of Lille were forgotten ; people went about pitying the situation of the enemy's army, hemmed in as it was without a chance of escape. This nonsense did not last very long. Marlborough and Prince Eugène, after various feints, crossed the Scheldt by four bridges on the night of the 26th of October without the slightest opposition. The King heard of it by a despatch from Vendôme in which he begged him to remember that he had always said it was impossible to hold the line of the Scheldt ! This great commander must

have had a very short memory, or he had a poor opinion of the intelligence of the King, the Court, and the public in general. It seems incredible that he should have expressed two opinions so diametrically opposite to each other in less than a fortnight ; but the King, the Court, and the army were witnesses to the fact. Even his cabal did not attempt to deny it ; they merely tried to divert public attention by bringing fresh accusations against the Duke of Burgundy. One of the stories they told about him was this : The army was at Saussoy, near Tournai ; and the general opinion, which the Duke of Burgundy had been brought to share, was that there would be nothing doing for the present. Several reports came in that the enemy was in motion, and Vendôme went off with some detachments to reconnoitre. The same evening he sent word to the Duke of Burgundy that the reports were confirmed, and that he had better follow him with the whole army next morning. When the Duke received this letter he was undressing to go to bed. He consulted several of his officers, who expressed different opinions ; some were for marching at once ; others thought he had better not go to bed, so as to march at daylight ; others advised him to take some rest, and march in the morning in accordance with Vendôme's instructions. The young Prince adopted the last course. He was up at daybreak, and made a long breakfast. As he was rising from table news arrived that the enemy had crossed the Scheldt with their whole army. The thing was done, and there was no remedy ; the Prince was in despair. The fact is that if he had followed the only good advice offered to him, and started at once, there would still have been so much delay before the army could march that it could not have arrived in time to prevent the crossing. But it would have been wiser to pay more regard to appearances ; and, though an immediate advance would have been really useless, it was a good opportunity for the Prince to show his promptitude and zeal.

To this mistake he added another, which, though no one could say that it had any bad consequences, seemed to indicate a carelessness of which he was not really guilty. The enemy having unexpectedly succeeded in their enterprise, it was not for him to decide on the next movement without hearing from M. de Vendôme. It was still early ; the army was not to march, so the Prince unfortunately

thought he was free to amuse himself a little ; he went into Tournai to play tennis. This ill-timed game caused a great scandal in the army ; and the cabal spread the story far and wide, with all sorts of malicious comments and additions of their own.

The crossing of the Scheldt was followed by a sharp action. Generals Hautefort and Sousternon found themselves cut off from the rest of the army, and had to retreat hastily. The pursuit was hot, and a running fight ensued which went on for some miles. At last Hautefort and Sousternon, with Nangis, who had joined them, managed to extricate themselves, and rejoined the main body a day or two afterwards. This unfortunate combat cost us a good many men. Hautefort's conduct was highly commended, even by the enemy, who praised his skilful retreat ; Sousternon, on the contrary, lost his head, and was much blamed. Nangis also behaved with courage and intelligence. The King did not hear of this fight for several days, and then only through the Duke de la Trémouille, whose only son had been present and distinguished himself. Feeling annoyed that the King did not mention the subject, he chose his opportunity while waiting on him at dinner, and began speaking about the passage of the Scheldt, where, he said, his son's regiment had been a good deal cut up. "How do you mean, cut up?" said the King ; "there was no fighting at all." "I beg your pardon, Sir, there was a sharp action," said the Duke ; and at once related what had occurred. The King listened with great attention, asked many questions, and confessed that he had heard nothing about it. It happened that, a few minutes after he left the table, Chamillart came unexpectedly into his private room. Having got through the business which brought him, a short affair, the King asked him what this action on the Scheldt was, and why he had not mentioned it. The Minister looked confused, and replied that it was of no importance ; but, as the King continued to press him for particulars, mentioning some details himself, he confessed that he had reported the matter to Madame de Maintenon ; but, the whole business of the crossing of the Scheldt being so disagreeable, they both thought it better to say nothing about it. On hearing this remarkable explanation the King stopped abruptly, and said not a word more.

Having crossed the Scheldt, Marlborough marched across

the Dendre and encamped at Wetter, near Ghent, while Prince Eugène returned to his siege. The enemy were repulsed in several attempts on the covered way, but the garrison was in great straits ; Marshal Boufflers had nothing but horseflesh served at his table, and ammunition was becoming scarce. The Marshal still contrived to keep up communications with the outside. The King, knowing how matters stood, sent him orders, under his own hand, to surrender ; but the Marshal kept them secret, and put off the evil moment as long as he could. In this critical state of affairs our army was forced by exhaustion and want of supplies to separate, although it was evident that the enemy intended to besiege Ghent. It was no longer fitting that the Princes should remain in Flanders, and they received orders to return ; but they were very reluctant to do so on account of Ghent. The Duke of Burgundy had another reason ; Vendôme appeared not to have received the same orders, and was making ostentatious preparations for remaining on the frontier, as if he were to take command again in the spring. But, though he was careful to conceal the fact, he had received his recall ; he felt that he was about to be called to account, and began to reflect, with some apprehension, on certain matters which he had hitherto treated with contempt. He humbled himself so far as to beg, as a favour, to be allowed to remain with the army ; though he had begun by offering to do so in the tone of one sacrificing his own inclinations to the King's service. While the exchange of letters on this subject was still going on the Princes received more peremptory orders, and returned to the Court.

I had returned thither about a fortnight before, and made myself acquainted with all that had happened during my short absence. There was an interval of three days between the return of the Duke of Orleans and that of the Princes ; I availed myself of it to tell him many important things which I had been prevented from writing to him by the inconvenience of ciphered letters. His jealousy of the Princes of the Blood, his dislike of the Prince of Conti in particular, together with a natural inclination to be in the fashion, disposed him to take Vendôme's side ; and I was afraid he might make the mistake of openly opposing the Duke of Burgundy. By means of letters in cipher I had kept him posted up in the principal occurrences at Court

and at the seat of war ; I now explained them in greater detail, and made him see that it would be not only unjust, but dangerous, to take sides against the Duke of Burgundy. He followed my advice, and soon had reason to congratulate himself on having done so.

The Duchess of Burgundy was much agitated about the reception awaiting her husband, and anxious to have an opportunity of talking to him before he saw the King. I sent her word that she had better tell him to arrange his journey so as to arrive about one or two in the morning ; in this way they would have the whole night to talk matters over ; he would be able to see the Duke de Beauvilliers and, possibly, Madame de Maintenon, the first thing in the morning ; moreover, he would be able to pay his respects to the King and Monseigneur without witnesses, except a few valets, who would remain at a distance. Apparently she did not receive this advice ; or, if she did, she did not follow it. The young Prince arrived on Monday, the 11th of December, a little after seven in the evening. He alighted, I do not know why, in the Court of the Princes, instead of in the Great Courtyard. I was at that moment in the rooms of Madame de Roucy, whose windows looked out on the Court. I instantly went out, and when I arrived at the top of the great flight of steps I saw the Prince ascending them between the Dukes de Beauvilliers and de la Rocheguyon. He looked well, cheerful, and smiling ; and was talking to right and left. I bowed to him when he reached the top ; he did me the honour of embracing me, and did it in such a way as to show that it was not merely a compliment due to my rank ; for some distance he talked only to me, and told me in a low voice that he was aware how I had spoken and acted in his behalf. He was met by a group of courtiers, with the Duke de la Rochefoucauld at their head ; surrounded by them he crossed the great guard-room, and went to Madame de Maintenon's room. Pontchartrain was transacting ministerial business there with the King, as usual, on that day ; he was the only eye-witness of this curious scene, which he observed closely, and described to me the same evening. Although I say he was the only witness, the Duchess of Burgundy kept running in and out ; but to enable the scene to be understood properly I must describe the locality.

Madame de Maintenon's apartments were on the same

level as the hall of the King's Guards, and facing it. Her own private room, which was very large, was approached through two narrow ante-chambers, into the second of which only the Captain of the Guard had the right to enter. Between the door opening into this second ante-chamber and the fireplace was the King's arm-chair, with its back to the wall, a table in front of it, and a seat for the Minister who was doing business with him. On the other side of the fireplace was a niche hung with red damask, in which Madame de Maintenon sat, with a little table in front of her. Farther on was her bed in an alcove. Opposite the foot of the bed was a door, approached by an ascent of five steps, which led into another very large drawing-room; beyond this again was the first ante-chamber of the Duke of Burgundy's apartments.¹ Every evening the Duchess of Burgundy played cards in the drawing-room, with such ladies as had the privilege of going there; thence she used to go, as often as she pleased, into the adjoining room, namely, that where Madame de Maintenon and the King sat, the fireplace between them. Monseigneur, after the play, used to go into the drawing-room; but the King never went there, and Madame de Maintenon very seldom.

Before the King's supper Madame de Maintenon's servants used to bring in some soup and other things; her maid and one valet waited upon her at supper; the King being always present, and usually the Minister with whom he was doing business. Supper did not last long; when it was over the table was removed; Madame de Maintenon's maids immediately undressed her, a proceeding which only took a minute or two, and put her to bed. When the King received notice that his supper was served he used to go into a dressing-room for two or three minutes; then went and said a few words to Madame de Maintenon, and afterwards rang a bell which communicated with the drawing-room. Then the Duchess of Burgundy and her ladies, Monseigneur, and the Dukes of Burgundy and Berry, if

¹ These rooms, so full of interesting associations, were unfortunately changed beyond recognition during Louis Philippe's tasteless alterations. The room now shown as Madame de Maintenon's is merely what remained of it after part had been cut off for the construction of a staircase, to give access to some picture-galleries in the upper story. Louis Philippe said afterwards, by way of excuse, that he did not know it had been Madame de Maintenon's room.

they were there, passed through Madame de Maintenon's room ; and went before the King on his way to supper. Such ladies as did not belong to the Duchess of Burgundy's household went away ; or, if dressed for the King's supper (for one of the privileges attached to this drawing-room was that ladies were allowed to pay their court there to the Duchess of Burgundy without being in full dress), they went round by the guard-room, without crossing Madame de Maintenon's room. No man, except the three Princes already mentioned, ever entered the large drawing-room. All this having been explained, I now come to the details of the Duke of Burgundy's reception, which Pontchartrain observed very attentively, and related to me in detail half an hour afterwards.

As soon as the sort of buzz which precedes arrivals of this kind was audible in Madame de Maintenon's room the King became so nervous that he changed colour several times. The Duchess of Burgundy seemed frightened, and fluttered about the room to conceal her embarrassment ; ostensibly because she was uncertain whether the Prince would come in by the antechamber or by the drawing-room. Madame de Maintenon seemed thoughtful. Suddenly the doors were flung open, and the young Prince advanced to the King, who, with his usual inimitable self-control, at once put aside all appearance of embarrassment. He made two or three steps to meet his grandson, embraced him with some show of affection, spoke to him about his journey, and then, turning towards the Princess, " Have you nothing to say to her ? " he said with a smile. The Prince looked at her for an instant, and made a respectful reply, without moving from his place, as though not venturing to turn his eyes away from the King. He then saluted Madame de Maintenon, who received him very cordially. This chat about the journey, the state of the roads, and so on, lasted six or seven minutes, all remaining standing. The King then said it was not fair to deprive the Prince any longer of the pleasure of being alone with the Duchess, and sent him away, adding that they could meet again later on. The Prince bowed to the King and Madame de Maintenon ; then, passing by a few ladies of the Palace who had been bold enough to intrude into the room, at the foot of the five steps, he entered the drawing-room, embraced the Duchess of Burgundy, saluted the ladies by kissing them, and passed

on into his own apartments, where he shut himself up with the Duchess.

Their interview lasted two hours, and more ; quite towards the end Madame d'O and the Maréchale d'Estrées went in ; and a few minutes later the Duchess of Burgundy came out with them, and returned to Madame de Maintenon's drawing-room. Monseigneur came there when the theatre was over, as usual ; the Duchess was rather put out because her husband seemed in no hurry to come and see Monseigneur. She went to look for him, and reported that he was having his hair powdered ; but, seeing that Monseigneur did not seem pleased, she sent to hasten him. In the meanwhile the Maréchale d'Estrées, who was giddy and feather-brained, and accustomed to say anything that came into her head, began teasing Monseigneur because he waited so quietly for his son, instead of going himself to embrace him. This impertinence was not well received ; Monseigneur replied tartly that it was not for him to go and look for the Duke of Burgundy, but for his son to come and see him. At last the young Prince came. Monseigneur gave him a fairly good reception, but not nearly so cordial as the King's. Almost immediately afterwards the King's bell rang, and all went out to his supper. Towards the *entremets* the Duke of Berry arrived, and came to salute the King at table. At the sight of him all hearts expanded. The King embraced him very tenderly ; Monseigneur's affection was expressed in his looks, for he did not venture to embrace him in the King's presence. He remained standing by the King's chair during the remainder of supper ; the conversation turning merely on trifles. The King talked to the Duke of Burgundy a little, but his manner when he spoke to the Duke of Berry was quite different. After supper they all went to the King's private room, as usual ; and, after that, the Duke of Berry went to a supper which the Duchess of Burgundy had ordered to be prepared for him in her own apartments. It was cut rather too short by the conjugal impatience of the Duke of Burgundy.

I ventured to remark to the Duke de Beauvilliers that the Duke of Burgundy's cheerfulness struck me as rather excessive, considering from what a disastrous campaign he was returning. He could not help admitting that I was right ; and said that he would give the young Prince a hint on the subject. Everybody, in fact, made remarks about

this ill-timed gaiety. It was not till the third day after his arrival that the Duke of Burgundy had a private audience of the King ; but on that day he had one which lasted three hours, Madame de Maintenon being present. I feared lest his religious scruples should make him reticent on the subject of M. de Vendôme ; but I heard afterwards that he had spoken his mind quite freely, having been fortified by the advice of the Duchess, and reassured on the point of conscience by the Duke de Beauvilliers. He gave a full and detailed account of all that had occurred during the campaign, especially with regard to the relations between himself and Vendôme. A man of less rigid piety might perhaps have expressed himself in stronger terms ; still, he did tell everything, with a freedom which no one would have expected, considering his own character and that of the person to whom he spoke. He wound up by asking most earnestly that he might be given the command of an army during the next campaign, and the King promised that it should be so. Two days later the Duke of Burgundy had a long interview with Monseigneur at Meudon, where he also had a private conversation with Mademoiselle Choin. She had done him good service with Monseigneur. The alliance between this woman and Madame de Maintenon was becoming very intimate. She knew how warmly the latter had espoused the cause of the young Prince ; out of regard for her own interests she did not wish to set them all against her ; and the Duke of Burgundy reaped some advantage in consequence during this important crisis.

Gamaches and d'O came back with the Princes. The latter, who was entirely exonerated by them, was received as if nothing had happened. Gamaches, a frank, chattering native of Picardy, had the good sense to avoid inconvenient questions by going away to his own home. Though his want of capacity unfitted him on the whole for the post of adviser to the Duke of Burgundy, he had been unable to refrain from rebuking him and the Duke of Berry, in public, for some rather childish amusements which they indulged in. He used to tell them that before long there would be a cleverer performer than either of them in that line, namely, the Duke of Brittany !¹ One day, he was returning from Mass with the Duke of Burgundy ; it was during a serious crisis, when he would rather have seen the Prince on horse-

¹ Who was then three years old.

back. "You will gain the kingdom of heaven, Sir," said he, "but as for winning an earthly kingdom, Prince Eugène and Marlborough set about it better than you do!" He said an admirable thing to the two Princes, quite publicly, on the subject of the King of England. That unfortunate Sovereign, under his assumed name, treated them with as great respect as if he had been a private person of no particular rank; and they, on their part, behaved in a most unbecoming manner to him, not showing him any of the attentions to which he was entitled, notwithstanding his incognito, often making him wait with the crowd in their antechamber, and hardly ever speaking to him. This went on during the entire campaign; and it was the more scandalous because the Chevalier de Saint Georges had won the affection and esteem of the whole army by his bravery and pleasant manners. Gamaches was extremely irritated by their conduct; one day, towards the end of the campaign, he lost his temper at last; and, addressing the two Princes before a number of persons: "Are you doing all this for a bet?" he exclaimed. "If so, you have won it, there can be no dispute about it; but now that you have won it, do at any rate talk a little to the Chevalier de St. Georges, and treat him with more politeness!" These sallies would have been all very well, and very much to the point, if he had made them in private; but, true as they were, his zeal and good intentions could not excuse his indiscretion in speaking in this manner before people. Everybody was accustomed to his plain speaking, and it gave no offence; but it was perfectly useless.

Boufflers' supplies being completely exhausted, he was forced to beat the *chamade*; and on the 9th of December the capitulation of the citadel of Lille was signed, Prince Eugène granting the Marshal his own terms. It was agreed that three French officers should remain as hostages for the payment of the debts contracted in the town by the garrison; the King was rather annoyed at hearing that Prince Eugène expressly stipulated that Maillebois should be one of them, making no secret of his reason for doing so, namely, that he was the eldest son of Desmarets. Marshal de Boufflers was sent to Douai in Prince Eugène's own carriage; the escort, of *malice prepense*, I fancy, was commanded by the Prince of Auvergne. The Duke of Marlborough had for some time been encamped near Ghent, and on the 11th of

December that place was invested, Prince Eugène taking up a position between the Lys and the Scheldt, after leaving a strong garrison in Lille. The Count de la Mothe was in command at Ghent ; his garrison consisted of twenty-nine battalions of infantry and several regiments of dragoons, with abundant supplies of all kinds ; and he had before his eyes the noble example set by Marshal Boufflers at Lille.

M. de Vendôme arrived at Versailles on the morning of the 15th of December, and went to salute the King just as he was going to dinner. The King embraced him with an air of delight which made the cabal very triumphant ; throughout the dinner he took the lead in the conversation ; which, however, turned merely on trifles. The King told him that he would discuss serious matters with him next day, in Madame de Maintenon's room. A postponement of this sort was something new for him, and seemed not to be of good augury. He then went to make his bow to the Duke of Burgundy, who received him graciously, in spite of all that had passed. Vendôme went to pay his respects to Monseigneur on his return from hunting, in the Princess of Conti's room ; it was there that he was really in his element. His reception was most cordial, so much so that he tried to take advantage of it and get Monseigneur to promise a visit to Anet. Much to his surprise, and that of the other persons present, Monseigneur gave him an ambiguous answer ; which, however, made it clear that he did not intend to go. Vendôme seemed embarrassed, and cut his visit short. As I was coming away from M. de Beauvilliers' rooms I met him going down the steps leading from the entrance to the gallery of the new wing. He was without servants or links, accompanied by Alberoni, and followed by a man whom I did not know. I saw him by the light of my links, and we bowed politely to each other, though there was no sort of intimacy between us. He seemed to be put out about something, and to be on his way to see M. du Maine, his chief adviser and supporter.

■ Next day he was not an hour with the King and Madame de Maintenon. He remained eight or ten days at Versailles and Marly, during which time he never once set foot in the Duchess of Burgundy's apartments. But this was nothing new for him ; he seemed to think the air of careless pride which he affected dispensed him from the most ordinary

duties of respect. His Abbé Alberoni had the impudence to appear as a courtier at the King's Mass. At last they took their departure for Anet. It was evident that he was conscious of a certain decline in favour, since he condescended to beg people to go and see him at Anet ; whereas in former years it was considered a mark of the highest distinction to be allowed to go, and the place was crowded with the highest and most distinguished persons in society. During his sojourn there this time he could see, by the diminution of his company, that he had lost ground. Some made excuses ; others failed to keep the engagements they had made. Every one began to make a fuss about the distance, fifteen leagues, which they had to travel for a visit, which in other years had been considered as a distinction at least equal to that of an invitation to Marly. He afterwards came to Marly himself, and spent his whole time either there or at Meudon, never at Versailles, till a change occurred which I shall soon have to mention.

Marshal Boufflers arrived from Douai on the evening of the 16th, the day after Vendôme's return, and at once asked the Duke d'Harcourt, the Captain of the Guard on duty, to let the King know he was there. The King, who had just concluded his audience of Vendôme, sent word that he was to come at once to Madame de Maintenon's room. Directly the door opened the King went to meet him and embraced him closely two or three times, expressing his gratitude and approval in the most flattering terms. During these few moments they had advanced into the room, and the door was shut ; Madame de Maintenon came forward to congratulate the Marshal, when the King, addressing him, said that, after the great services he had rendered to his country, he must leave it to him to choose his own reward. Boufflers replied modestly and respectfully that he was sufficiently rewarded by the esteem of his Sovereign ; and, though the King pressed him repeatedly, he could not be induced to name any reward. " Well, Marshal," said the King at last, " since you will not ask anything, I will tell you what I have thought of ; and if I have omitted anything you would like, I shall be glad to give it you in addition. I create you a Peer ; I give you the reversion of your office as Governor of Flanders for your son ; and I allow you the privilege of the same *entrées* as the First Gentleman of the Chamber." The Marshal threw

himself at the King's feet, overwhelmed with gratitude for favours which surpassed his utmost expectations.

These three favours were in fact unique, each in its own particular way. It was the first which gratified the Marshal most, for the door of admission to the Peerage had long been closed. The King had repented of making the batch of fourteen Peers in 1663; but had felt himself obliged to add four more in 1665. After this he declared that he would make no more; the Dukes created by him subsequently, though hereditary, were not Peers; they held the rank of "verified" Dukes, which is erroneously supposed to have been invented by Louis XIV, though in reality it has existed from the earliest times. The only two Peers he created afterwards were the Archbishop of Paris and the Duke de Béthune; in fulfilment of long-standing promises, as I have related elsewhere. The King was equally determined to grant no more reversions of offices: he had expressed himself so decidedly on the subject that for many years no one had ventured to mention such a thing. The only exceptions he made were in favour of the Secretaries of State; for he never could refuse anything to his Ministers. Moreover, he liked to have young men in these important offices, because he imagined that he instructed them in their duties; and he wished the public to think that he was an independent ruler; though, as a matter of fact, no Sovereign was ever more completely governed by his Ministers. As regards the privilege of the grand *entrées*, since the death of La Feuillade's father, M. de Lausun was the only person who enjoyed it without holding any office. Apart from the distinction, this privilege was regarded as a very great one indeed, because it enabled the possessor to speak to the King at any time without witnesses and without obtaining a special audience: a thing which was rarely granted and always aroused curiosity. Boufflers was so fortunate that in all this jealous Court, and indeed in all France, there was not a single person who did not approve of what the King had done. He behaved with admirable modesty, giving the credit of his brilliant defence entirely to his troops. His simple and modest heroism made a great impression on the public, who began to observe the contrast between him and Vendôme, that factitious hero of a treacherous and dangerous cabal.

A few days after the return of the Duke of Burgundy

Cheverny, a very truthful man, told me something which I cannot refrain from setting down here, though I can hardly write it without confusion. He had just had a conversation with the Duke of Burgundy, in which he had spoken openly to the young Prince of the calumnies circulated about him during the campaign. The latter said he knew I had taken his part warmly, and that the Prince of Conti had also done so ; adding that, when one had the approval of two such men, one might disregard what other people said. I was covered with confusion at being put on the same level with a man who excelled me in military knowledge, even more than in birth and position. But I felt grateful to M. de Beauvilliers ; for I saw he had thoroughly kept the promise which he made me when I wanted to go to La Ferté.

The Duke of Berwick returned to Court on the 23rd of December ; in private and in public he spoke his mind freely about M. de Vendôme and the occurrences in Flanders. Emboldened by his example, all the officers who had returned from the army began to talk freely ; a new light was thrown on many matters ; there was a strong revulsion of feeling among the public, and growing indignation against Vendôme. His cabal began to feel uneasy about their hero ; few people went to visit him at Anet ; there was a rumour that the Duke of Burgundy was to command an army in the next campaign, with only Marshals of France under him. In short, there was a vague feeling that Vendôme's favour was beginning to decline ; and it was not long before his downfall became manifest.

Chamillart, grieved beyond measure by the loss of Lille, had conceived the design of recapturing the place as soon as the Duke of Marlborough and Prince Eugène should have left Holland, and the enemy's army gone into winter-quarters. His plan was bold and well considered ; he had put the finishing touches to it during his visit to Flanders ; all preparations had been made ; troops were already on their way from Dauphiné and Savoy. Chamillart wished the King to take command in person, not only to animate the troops by his presence, but to give him the glory of the conquest ; but, as the siege would be very costly and money was scarce, he wished the King's equipages to be on as modest a scale as possible, and consequently that no ladies should accompany him ; for they always cause much

useless trouble and expense with an army. To ensure this, it was necessary to conceal the plan entirely from Madame de Maintenon, and to get the King to promise to keep the secret. Chamlay, whom Chamillart took into his confidence, highly approved of the project ; but, as a friend, he warned him that he was staking his position on its success, for Madame de Maintenon would never forgive him ; he reminded him how Louvois had been ruined because he excluded the ladies from a similar expedition against Mons ; adding that he could not have forgotten this ill-omened precedent, since he had heard from the King himself that if Louvois had not died so suddenly he would have been arrested the very next day. Chamillart realised his danger ; but he was naturally courageous ; he loved his country and adored the King, if I may say so, as a man adores his mistress. He disregarded the warning, and went on with his plans ; when they were thoroughly prepared he laid them before the King, who was charmed with their clearness and boldness, and the apparent facility of carrying out the project.

Marshal Boufflers was taken into the secret, and immediately sent to Flanders, on some pretext or other, to make arrangements on the spot ; but, for fear of arousing the enemy's suspicions, no other officer of high rank was sent there, and Colonels and other regimental officers were allowed to remain in France on leave. The King was much attracted by this project ; but he was not in the habit of keeping anything concealed from Madame de Maintenon, and it was inconvenient for him to have to work with Chamillart in secret, at unaccustomed hours. He determined to tell her all about it ; flattering himself that he would be able to make her understand the reasons which obliged him to leave her at Versailles with the Duchess of Burgundy and all the other ladies. Madame de Maintenon had sufficient self-control to conceal her surprise and indignation. She expressed the highest approval of the project, went into all the details, and commended Chamillart for his genius in conceiving so bold an enterprise, and his industry in making the necessary preparations. Boufflers left for Flanders on the 26th of December, and the French and Swiss Guards had orders to be ready to march on the 1st of February.

A remarkable and unprecedented event happened on

the last evening of the year. When the King had, as usual, retired to his private room with the members of his family after his supper, Chamillart arrived without having been sent for, and whispered to the King that he brought an important despatch from Marshal Boufflers. Thereupon the King at once said good-night to Monseigneur and the Princesses, who left the room, with all the other persons present, and the King worked for a whole hour with the Minister before his *coucher*, showing how intent he was on the project for the recapture of Lille.

CHAPTER X

1709

Surrender of Ghent—Loss of Bruges and Plassendal—Madame de Maintenon dissuades the King from the attempt on Lille—Extraordinarily severe winter—Vendôme informed that his services would not be required in the following campaign—His insolence abated—A dangerous lunatic—Death of Father de la Chaise—His character—His warning to the King about the Jesuits—Choice of his successor—Father Tellier appointed—His history and character—Description of his person—He wishes for my acquaintance—My embarrassment—Death of Madame d'Heudicourt—Of Madame de Soubise—The Duke de Mortemart—A malicious calumny against me—I refute it angrily—Death of M. d'Avaux—Louvois and the window at Trianon—Death of Madame de Vivonne—Of Boisseuil—His duel with a cheating gambler.

BOUFFLERS began concentrating his forces as soon as he returned to Douai ; for, besides the great project of retaking Lille, he intended to relieve Ghent. But he had no opportunity for carrying this design into execution ; on the 29th of December, after only three days of open trenches, the place surrendered. La Mothe must have lost his head completely, for his courage and fidelity were beyond suspicion ; and if he had made anything of a defence he might certainly have expected the Marshal's bâton. The enemy scoffed at him openly ; it was fortunate for them that he did not hold out two days longer, for immediately after the capitulation rain set in with such violence that they would have been forced to raise the siege. His only excuse was that the place was in a bad state of defence ; but it was no worse than when he took the command ; and it was hardly worth his while to take it if he meant to hold out only three days. But there never was a more incapable man ; unfortunately, for a long time past incapacity seemed to have been looked upon as a title to promotion in all branches of the public service, and our repeated disasters made no difference in that respect. In consequence of

this surrender we were forced to evacuate Bruges and the fort of Plassendal; and with these easy conquests Marlborough and Prince Eugène wound up their brilliant campaign.

The Maréchale de la Mothe died on the 6th of January, having been a widow since 1657. When Madame de Montausier, finding herself unequal to the duties of her two offices as governess to Monseigneur and Lady-in-Waiting to the Queen, resigned the former, Louvois obtained the appointment for the Maréchale de la Mothe, who was a cousin of his wife's. She had lived entirely in the country, and previous to her appointment no one at Court knew her. She was an excellent woman, and took the greatest care of the Children of France, bringing them up with dignity and politeness. She herself was extremely dignified, with a majestic figure and an imposing countenance; but, for all that, she never had a grain of common sense, and used to talk the greatest nonsense. However, her great experience of society carried her successfully through the routine of her duties. She was greatly respected; and, though very liberal and noble in her expenditure, she accumulated a large fortune. She kept her health to the last; on the Friday night she slept as usual in the same room with the Duke of Brittany; on Saturday she was taken ill and received the last Sacraments, and on Sunday she died, at the age of eighty-five.

While Boufflers was wearing out his health by his exertions in preparing for the recapture of Lille, Madame de Maintenon was leaving no stone unturned to prevent the attempt being made. She had disliked it from the first; and further reflection confirmed her in her determination to bring it to nothing. She did not intend, if she could help it, to be separated from the King for an indefinite time while the siege was going on; especially as he would be under the influence of Chamillart, which would be increased in the event of success. She, therefore, made the most of her opportunities; and put in a word or two from time to time, so artfully, that the project of recapturing Lille soon began to appear to the King not quite so easy as he had thought it at first; then it seemed difficult; in the end he came to the conclusion that it was too dangerous and costly, and Boufflers received orders to give it up. Madame de Maintenon had a useful ally in the extraordinary frost

which set in on the eve of the Epiphany, and lasted for nearly a month. No one had ever seen anything like it ; in four days the Seine and other rivers were frozen over ; and, what was quite unprecedented, the sea all along the coast was covered with ice strong enough to bear. The cold was said to be as intense as in the regions beyond Sweden. What ruined everything, and ensured the complete failure of all crops, was that a thaw set in which lasted seven or eight days, after which the frost began again as hard as ever. All the fruit-trees were killed, and many other trees of the hardiest kinds. Madame de Maintenon made the most of this extraordinary weather ; and, indeed, it would have made a siege impossible. Chamillart was deeply grieved by the failure of his scheme, but not much surprised ; for he had put little faith in it from the time when he heard that Madame de Maintenon had been let into the secret. He now had reason to dread the fulfilment of Chamlay's prophecy with regard to himself personally.

During this time Vendôme, though at Anet, was drawing his pay as a General on service in the field ; this looked as if he was destined to take command again in the next campaign, and his cabal recovered their spirits. But their little triumph did not last long. M. de Vendôme came to Versailles for the usual ceremonies of the Order on Candlemas Day ¹ ; he was then informed that his services would not be required, and that his active-service pay would be discontinued. It was a bitter disappointment to him ; but he swallowed the pill with a good grace, knowing that he deserved worse things, and that he was not yet out of danger. It was this consciousness of guilt which made him so meek for the first time in his life. He made no alteration in his usual conduct, except that the insolent audacity of his talk was considerably abated.

On the 17th of January an incident occurred at the play at Versailles which explained some previous conduct on the part of La Châtre. He was a man of quality, very handsome and very vain, a nephew of the Maréchale d'Humières, a brave and honourable man, who went a good deal into society, and was always engaged in some love-affair. He went by the name of the "handsome shepherd," and people used rather to laugh at him. His manners were always impetuous, and latterly he had had some unpleasant fits of

¹ The 2nd of February.

temper. That evening at the play he suddenly took it into his head that he was surrounded by enemies, drew his sword, shouted out words of command, and wanted to rush at the actors and spectators. La Vallière, who was sitting next him, caught him in his arms, and managed to make him believe that he himself was taken ill, and wanted to be helped out of the theatre. In this clever way La Châtre was induced to go out, but he was still determined to rush on his imaginary enemies. This took place in the presence of Monseigneur and the whole Court, and caused a good deal of excitement. Some other stories now came out about La Châtre. One of his first paroxysms came on as he was calling on the Prince of Conti, who was lying on a sofa not far from the fire, laid up with gout, and quite unable to set foot on the ground. It happened that La Châtre was left alone with the Prince, when he began of a sudden to shout, drew his sword, and began hewing at the chairs and screens. The Prince of Conti, in great astonishment, tried to calm him ; but the other kept on shouting, " Here is the enemy ! Come on, follow me ! " and so on ; still brandishing his sword. The Prince of Conti confessed afterwards that he had never been so frightened in his life, for he was perfectly helpless ; he could not reach the bell, nor even seize the tongs as a weapon ; and he expected every moment that the madman would take him for an enemy and rush at him with his sword. At last some one came in, and La Châtre recovered his senses. The Prince of Conti ordered his servants to say nothing about this adventure, and kept the secret himself ; only he asked the Duke d'Humières to call upon him, and confided it to him, as La Châtre's nearest relation. People used to avoid him as much as they could after this occurrence at the play ; but he was not put under restraint, nor even kept away from the Court. We shall see, later on, what became of him.

Father de la Chaise, who had been the King's confessor for more than thirty-two years, died on the 20th of January. He was a gentleman by birth ; and his father, who had served with distinction and had made a good marriage, would have been rich, as riches go in his native district of Forey, if he had not had a dozen children. Father de la Chaise was a man of no great ability, but sensible, just and upright ; mild and moderate in his views ; he disliked violence, or anything like to cause a public scandal, and abhorred

tale-bearing. Although much attached to his family, he was thoroughly disinterested ; he was proud of his birth, and favoured the nobility as much as he could. He was careful to choose proper persons for the episcopate, especially for the more important sees ; and so long as the selection was left entirely to him he was very successful in his appointments. If he found he had been deceived and led into making a mistake he was always ready to admit it, and did his best to repair any evil consequences of his error ; we have seen an instance of this in the affair of the Abbé Caudelet. He was, however, cautious and judicious ; a good man and a worthy priest ; a strong Jesuit, but not rabid or blindly subservient to his Society ; he knew the Jesuits better than they imagined, though he lived with them in all respects as one of themselves. He always refused his consent to the destruction of Port-Royal-des-Champs ; nor would he oppose Cardinal de Noailles in anything, though the Cardinal had attained to his position without his assistance. So far as lay in his power he always took the part of the Archbishop of Cambrai, and was a faithful friend to Cardinal de Bouillon, to whom he rendered many useful services. While the King's passion for Madame de Montespan lasted Father de la Chaise often found it advisable to fall ill at Eastertide ; on one occasion he sent, as his substitute, Father Deschamps, who had the courage to refuse absolution to the King. He always had on his table the " New Testament " by Father Quesnel, who was the cause of such bitter controversies and disputes in the Church ; if any one expressed surprise that he should read a book written by such an author he replied that he was ready to acknowledge goodness wherever he found it ; that he did not know a more excellent or instructive book ; and, as he had little time for religious reading, he preferred it to any other, because he found in it something good about everything.

When he was about eighty years of age Father de la Chaise wished to resign his post, though still in possession of all his faculties ; but the King would not hear of it. Soon afterwards his mental powers began to decay, and the Jesuits, who perceived it before he did, urged him to make way for a successor ; he himself sincerely wished for repose, but the King still refused, and he had to bear his burden to the end. His body became decrepit, his memory had

gone, his judgement was weakened, and his mind confused—very serious drawbacks for a confessor ; but nothing could change the King's determination to keep him. Up to the last he had him brought in, though little better than a living corpse, to go through his accustomed business. Just before his death he had the strength and courage to write a long letter to the King, who immediately sent a kind answer, written in his own hand ; after which Father de la Chaise gave himself up entirely to God. Father Tellier, Provincial of the Jesuits, and Father Daniel, the Superior of their professed house, asked him whether he had done everything which his conscience could require, and whether he had considered the interests and honour of their Society. He replied that, as to the first point, his conscience was at ease, and they would soon see what he had done as regarded the second. Soon afterwards he died very peacefully, at five in the morning.

As soon as the King's *lever* was over the two Superiors brought him the keys of Father de la Chaise's room, where he had an immense collection of reports and papers. He received them in public, and spoke highly of Father de la Chaise, praising him especially for his kind heart ; then, turning to the two Fathers with a smile, he added, in presence of all the courtiers, " He was so kind that I used sometimes to reproach him with it, and he would reply, ' It is not I who am kind-hearted, but you who are too hard ! ' " The Fathers and other bystanders were so much astonished at this story that they cast down their eyes ; it soon became known, and nobody thought Father de la Chaise in the wrong. He did intercept many blows during his life, suppressed many anonymous accusations and other rascalities, rendered many services, and never injured any one if he could possibly avoid it. Consequently he was universally regretted. It had always been felt that his death would be a great loss, but how great was not thoroughly realised till after the appointment of his terrible successor. Even those most opposed to the Jesuits were forced to do him justice, and to admit that he was a man of birth and breeding, well qualified in every respect for the office which he held.

Maréchal, the King's surgeon, told me a story which is worth recording. The King, he said, talking to him about Father de la Chaise, had related an instance of his strong attachment to his person. A few years before his

death the Father told him that he was growing old, and before long it would be necessary to appoint another confessor in his place. He begged him, not only as a favour to him, but for his own sake, to choose a Jesuit. He knew his Society thoroughly, he said, and it was far from deserving all that had been said and written against it; still, he repeated, he knew it; it was a widely extended organisation, comprising persons of very different characters, for all of whom it was impossible to answer. It was not advisable to drive it to desperation, for a crime was easily committed, as had been shown by previous events in history. Maréchal turned pale on hearing this story, and had great difficulty in concealing his terror.

It was this consideration which made Henry IV recall the Jesuits and load them with benefits. The pyramid¹ of Jean Châtel infuriated them; under Louis XIV they found a man, Fourcy, Provost of the Merchants, willing to listen to them, and in a position to help them. Fourcy, backed up by his father-in-law, the Chancellor Boucherat, who kept the Parliament quiet, had the pyramid razed to the ground. For this he was rewarded by the gift of the rich abbey of St. Vandrille to his son, who had only just left school, to the astonishment of the public. The King was not more strong-minded than Henry IV; he bore in mind the advice of Father de la Chaise, and took care not to expose himself to the vengeance of the Jesuits by choosing a confessor outside their Society. He commissioned the Dukes de Beauvilliers and de Chevreuse to make inquiries quietly, and see what Jesuit was most suitable for the office. The Bishop of Chartres and the priest of St. Sulpice could not regard the choice with indifference, and they wished to have a voice in the matter; but the affair of the Archbishop of Cambrai had placed an impassable barrier between them and the two Dukes. Unfortunately, it happened that Father de la Chaise died just at the time when the interests of the Duke of Burgundy had brought about a temporary reconciliation between the Duke de Beauvilliers and Madame de Maintenon; she took advantage of it, and obtained leave for the Bishop of Chartres and La Chétardie, the parish priest of St. Sulpice, to be associated with the

¹ Jean Châtel attempted to assassinate Henry IV. His house was pulled down, and on its site the Parliament of Paris caused a pyramid to be erected, with an inscription in Latin and French attributing the crime to the instigation of the Jesuits.

two Dukes ; both of whom, following the example of the Archbishop of Cambrai, held St. Sulpice in great respect. La Chétardie had become priest of that parish since M. de Cambrai's affair : he was, it must be confessed, a very worthy man, though little better than an idiot. Guided by the opinion of the Bishop of Chartres, he gave his support to Father Tellier, the candidate most strongly backed by the Jesuits ; the two Dukes were taken in, and made a mistake for which both Church and State had to suffer. After a month's deliberation they recommended Father Tellier for the vacant office, and the King gave it to him on the 21st of February.

Father Tellier was personally unknown to the King ; even his name was known to him only because it was included in a list of five or six Jesuits which Father de la Chaise had submitted, as persons eligible to succeed him. He had passed through all the degrees of his Society ; had been a professor, a theologian, Rector, Provincial, and author. He had been entrusted with the defence of the Jesuits in the affair of the Chinese ceremonies and the worship of Confucius ; he took up their quarrel warmly, and wrote a book which nearly brought severe penalties on himself and his friends ; but, by dint of intrigues and influence at Rome, he escaped, his book being merely placed on the Index. It is surprising that after this he should have been appointed confessor to the King, considering that Father le Comte had been deprived of his office of confessor to the Duchess of Burgundy for his share in the same business of the Chinese ceremonies, though not nearly so deeply implicated in it as Father Tellier.

He was full of zeal for the overthrow of any school of thought opposed to the principles of his Society, and for the establishment of those principles as dogmas ; on the ruins, if necessary, of opinions held and taught by the Church in all ages. Brought up in these principles, and admitted for the sake of his undeniable genius to all the secrets of his Society, he lived only for its advancement, and thought that for such an object all means were lawful. Hard, obstinate, an indefatigable worker, caring nothing for amusements, and, indeed, incapable of amusing himself even in the company of his own colleagues, he esteemed others merely according to the degree in which they shared his own ruling passion. He thought of nothing but the

establishment of the despotic authority of his Society and its maxims ; on that point any compromise or toleration was odious to him ; if he admitted such a thing it was only to attain his object more surely ; any other plea for toleration he regarded as unworthy weakness, if not as a crime. He led an austere life, both from choice and because he was accustomed to it ; it was spent in incessant, uninterrupted work ; he expected the same assiduity from others, without the slightest consideration for them—he could not understand why they should expect it. His health, both mental and bodily, was of iron ; and his nature cruel and unsympathetic. Thoroughly imbued as he was with the maxims and policy of his Society, he was profoundly deceitful and false, hiding his real sentiments under a thousand veils ; but when he could afford to reveal them, and was in a position to make himself feared, he was exacting to the last degree, giving nothing in return, breaking his most solemn promises when it was safe to do so, and persecuting with fury those to whom he had given them. He was a terrible man, bent on destruction ; and when he had once reached a position of authority he made no attempt to disguise his sentiments. In that position he was inaccessible even to the Jesuits, except four or five of the same stamp as himself ; he was a terror to the others ; even these few only approached him in trembling. They never dared to oppose him, except by cautious representation that he might attain his object better in another way. His violence was such that the more prudent among the Jesuits, even those most zealous for their Society, were terrified lest he should cause them to be expelled a second time. Nothing interrupted him in his headlong course, for he never wanted anything for himself ; he had neither friends nor relations ; he was sprung from the dregs of the people, and made no secret of it. His appearance was in conformity with his character ; he looked like a man whom one would not care to meet at the corner of a wood. His countenance was gloomy, false, and terrible ; his burning, evil eyes squinted extremely ; it made one shudder to look at him.

The first time he saw the King in his private room Fagon and Bloin were the only other persons present. Fagon, all bent and leaning on his stick, watched the interview intently ; noting the face of the new confessor, his bows and his speeches. The King asked him if he was related to the

family of M. le Tellier. "I related to M. le Tellier, Sir!" said he. "Very far from it indeed; I am a poor peasant from Normandy, where my father was a farmer!" Fagon made an effort to turn to Bloin, and whispered, pointing to the Jesuit: "Look, what a d—— d——!" It turned out that he was not far wrong in this remarkable estimate of a confessor. This one had put on all the hypocritical modesty of a man forced into his new position against his will, through obedience to his Society.

I have given this long description of the new confessor because it was he who caused all those frightful storms, from the effects of which the Church, the State, sound learning and doctrine, and so many virtuous people, are still suffering; and also because no man about the Court was so intimately acquainted with this terrible personage as I was. My parents had entrusted my religious education to the Jesuits, and had made a very fortunate choice of a teacher; for, whatever may be said about them, it cannot be denied that there are to be found here and there among their ranks some very holy and enlightened persons. I remained, therefore, where I had been placed, but without having any intercourse with any of them except my own particular instructor. His name was Father Sanadon; and his employment brought him into frequent contact with the Superiors of the Society, and consequently with Father Tellier as Provincial. When the latter became confessor he saw as few people as possible; partly from policy, to make the King think that he was independent; and also to avoid being asked to procure favours. About two or three weeks after his appointment I was very much surprised by Father Sanadon telling me that Father Tellier wished to be presented to me, for such was the term he used; and Father Tellier himself used it when Father Sanadon brought him to me next day. I had never seen him; I had not called on him, nor sent to congratulate him; but he overwhelmed me with compliments, and ended by asking me to let him come and see me from time to time, and to receive him kindly. In a word, he wanted to make an alliance with me; for my part I distrusted him, and, as none of my family had anything to do with the Church, I wanted nothing from him. But it was in vain that I tried to put him off politely; I was taken by storm. He paid me frequent visits, talked to me about public affairs, and asked my opinion: and, to say the truth,

drove me to despair ; for it was equally dangerous to repulse his advances or to discuss serious matters with him. This intimacy, though my share in it was purely passive, lasted till the King's death ; through it I became acquainted with a good many things which will be found in their proper place.

I suppose Father Sanadon must have told him about my intimacy with the Dukes de Chevreuse and de Beauvilliers ; perhaps also about that between the Duke of Burgundy and myself, which at that time was a profound secret ; and about my friendship with the Duke of Orleans. It is true that I was then fast rising into importance, though not as yet openly. For a long time I had been in the secret of many important affairs ; but it was not clearly perceived by the world in general.

The Court was delivered from a sort of household demon in the person of Madame d'Heudicourt, who died at Versailles on the 24th of January. I have already mentioned the very intimate friendship which sprung up between her and Madame de Maintenon at the Hôtel d'Albret, and lasted till the end of her days. She had grown old and hideous, but nobody could be cleverer than she was or better informed ; she was incomparably witty and amusing. It must be added that no one could be more gratuitously and consistently ill-natured ; and, as her life was passed in the most familiar intercourse with Madame de Maintenon and the King, she was extremely dangerous in consequence. Accordingly every knee was bent to her ; persons of the highest distinction, Ministers, the King's family, even his bastards, trembled before this maleficent witch, who understood only how to injure people, and never did any one a good turn in her life. Madame la Duchesse was on very good terms with her, and knew how to make use of her. Her apartments were a sanctuary to which it was by no means easy to obtain admission. Madame de Maintenon was extremely grieved ; she and the King lost a great deal of amusement by her death, but as it was always at the expense of other people, society in general was the gainer, for she was a heartless creature. Her husband got a good deal out of her by bullying, for though he lived very little with her, he had made her afraid of him. He was a horrid old man, extremely debauched, who was only tolerated on her account. He used to play very high, always wrangling and losing his temper. It was delightful to see him, when playing lans-

quenet at Marly, suddenly push back his *tabouret*, to break the shins of people who were teasing him by looking over his shoulder ; at other times he would spit behind him without caring who was in the way. Madame d'Heudicourt, clever as she was, was so much afraid of ghosts that she used to pay women to sit up every night with her. She carried this superstition so far that she was terrified lest she should see the ghost of an old parrot which she had kept for more than twenty years ; after its death she doubled the number of her *occupées*, which was the name she gave to her watchers. Her son, though by no means a coward, had the same mania ; and could not bear being alone in his room after dark. He was a sort of satyr ; as spiteful as his father, and even uglier. He used to make himself useful to the ladies, and in this way knew all the gossip of the Court ; a great drunkard ; there were no end of funny stories told about his terror of ghosts and his adventures when drunk. He himself used to tell most amusing stories, and could write verses in which he hit off people's absurdities in the wittiest manner. It was he who wrote the song about the Grand Provost and his family which I mentioned as having made Marshal Boufflers burst out laughing in the midst of the King's Mass. His mother also delighted in turning people into ridicule, and tearing their characters to pieces ; she never could hear any one well spoken of in the presence of the King and Madame de Maintenon without putting in a " but " which destroyed all the good effect. I used to say of her and Madame de Dangeau, who lived with Madame de Maintenon on the same familiar footing, that they were her evil and good angels respectively.

Madame de Soubise was drawing towards the end of her brilliant and profitable career. Her care for her beauty cost her her life. The thought of the solid advantages which it had procured for her, and gratified ambition, sustained her courage ; whether, now that she was so soon to pass to a very different scene, she turned her mind to other meditations is more than I can say. She had dieted herself most severely all her life, to preserve the freshness and delicacy of her complexion ; a little veal or chicken, salad, fruit, and some milky dishes were her only food ; very rarely she added a few drops of wine to the water which she always drank, and she never would submit to be laced in like other women, for fear of heating her loins and making her nose

red. She had had many children, some of whom had died of scrofula, in spite of the miracle which the touch of our Kings is supposed to effect. It is true that when they touch patients for the evil they have just received the Holy Communion ; Madame de Soubise did not exact this preparation ; and in the end she found herself attacked by the same disease, when she had attained an age for which such cooling diet was no longer suitable. She concealed her illness as long as she could ; but for the last two years of her life she had to stay at home, rotting amidst the magnificent furniture of that vast and superb Hôtel de Guise ; which, from first to last, had cost her husband several millions. She died on Sunday, the 3rd of February, at the age of sixty-one. She was not much regretted by her family, notwithstanding the favours she had procured for them ; and her husband's grief was not such as to prevent him from profiting by the occasion to claim a distinction belonging only to Princes ; not to foreign Princes, but to Princes of the Blood. The church of La Mercy stands just opposite the Hôtel de Guise ; M. de Soubise, in anticipation of his wife's death, had prepared a chapel there, in which he resolved that she should be buried. His object was to make a pretext of the nearness of the church to have her body carried thither direct, without being taken first to the parish church ; and this is never done, except in the case of a Prince or Princess of the Blood. He succeeded in getting the consent of the parish priest, who never suspected his real object. After the funeral had taken place Cardinal de Noailles heard what had occurred, and was displeased ; he gave the parish priest a scolding, but that was all. However, the attention of the world was drawn to the matter, and it gave rise to so much talk that steps were taken to prevent a repetition ; so that when M. de Soubise himself died in 1712 his body was carried to the parish church, and thence to La Mercy. I have mentioned this trifle because it is a specimen of the encroachments which are always going on, and shows how foreign Princes, as they are called, whether they are so by birth or by favour, have gradually acquired their distinctions and privileges.

A few days before the death of Madame de Soubise one of those adventures happened to me which are like a shell bursting over one's head, impossible to foresee or to guard against. I usually wound up my day by spending a couple

of hours, after eleven o'clock, in conversation with Chamillart's daughters ; I often heard some news in this way, and at that late hour there were no strangers in their rooms. One evening I was there as usual ; all three of them were present with their mother and Madame de Cani ; the Dukes de Mortemart and de la Feuillade were also there, for since Madame de Cani's marriage her brother was admitted at any hour. He was a sort of eccentric barbarian, a great drunkard ; since his marriage he had been endeavouring to re-enter society, but had not been very warmly welcomed there. He had always heard a great deal about the wit of the Mortemarts ; so he took it into his head that to get into society, he must show that he had a double share of it. Unfortunately, it is a thing not to be had by wishing for it ; with all his efforts he only succeeded in becoming a second-rate imitation of Roquelaure, who was himself not a very good model to adopt. I hardly knew him at all ; I had only met him at the houses of the Dukes de Chevreuse and de Beauvilliers, and very rarely at the familiar hours when I used to visit them ; when there he was taciturn and ill at ease, and always went away as soon as he could. His manners always showed traces of his love of wine and low company. M. and Madame de Beauvilliers used, notwithstanding their extreme reserve about anything affecting their family, to confide to me the grief and disappointment which he caused them ; and so, occasionally, did M. and Madame de Chevreuse.

On this particular evening the conversation turned on a promotion of the Order which was talked about for Candlemas Day, but which did not come off. The two gentlemen began asking me questions about the precedence which foreign Princes have obtained at these ceremonies, and why M. de Rohan and M. de Bouillon had never received the Order. I answered their questions as briefly and simply as I could, for I knew the persons I was talking to ; and, in point of fact, M. de Mortemart began making some very ill-timed jokes on the subject, in which he persisted, thinking himself extremely witty. I took refuge in silence. La Feuillade and the ladies, who really wished for information, tried to get me to talk, while M. de Mortemart went on with his jests. Although they really did not concern me personally, and were merely on the subject of precedence (in which, however, he was quite as much interested as myself

or the others), I became impatient and tried to beat a retreat ; but the others held me back, and I did not wish absolutely to extricate myself by force. At last I said a word or two to the Duke de Mortemart, telling him, with great moderation, what I thought of jests which seemed so strangely out of place in his mouth ; and after this I managed to escape. I did not return thither for some days ; the family were afraid I was angry with them, and spoke to Madame de Saint-Simon about it. I went back, and, in reply to their friendly apologies, made light of the affair ; but I resolved, if I ever met the Duke de Mortemart there again, to leave him in possession of the field. Four days after the incident which I have just related the King went to Marly, for the only time that winter ; and, for the first time for four years, Madame de Saint-Simon and I were not invited. When the Court returned, Madame de Roucy told me that Mademoiselle de Lislebonne and Madame d'Espinoy had told Madame d'Urfé and Pontchartrain, knowing that they were my friends and would repeat it to me, that they had great reason to complain of me, for I had said that I wished they were both dead and their House extinct ; and also that I was glad to be rid of Madame de Soubise, who had lived far too long as it was.

If Madame de Roucy had told me that I was accused of conspiring against the State I could not have been more astonished and angry. Although my conscience acquitted me of ever having expressed, or even imagined, such contemptible sentiments, I tried to recall any expressions that I might have let slip for some time past, likely to have given rise to such an accusation ; but in vain. I went at once to see Pontchartrain, who confirmed what his sister-in-law had told me ; and added that Mademoiselle de Lislebonne and Madame d'Espinoy had quoted the Duke de Mortemart as their authority. Madame d'Urfé told me the same thing. I begged her to tell the two sisters, that very evening, that I considered myself grossly insulted by the imputation of such unworthy sentiments to me ; but I felt sure no one who knew me would believe that I had uttered them ; I would not only refer them to the five ladies and the Duke de la Feuillade, the only persons present when the conversation took place, but if they wished it I would give the Duke de Mortemart the lie direct in their presence or in that of any one whom they might appoint. I added, still

with the request that what I said might be repeated to them, that I freely acknowledged myself dissatisfied with regard to some questions of precedence between their dignity and ours, but I had no wish to see these questions settled according to my notions of right and justice if it was to be at the cost of the extinction of their family and themselves.

My message was delivered in full that evening. Mademoiselle de Lislebonne replied most kindly, with that air of frankness which she often assumed; Madame d'Espinoy's answer was also gracious, but not so well expressed, for she was not nearly so clever as her elder sister. Both requested Madame d'Urfé to assure me that they had been much astonished at what they heard, and had no difficulty in believing that I had never said or imagined anything of the sort; their message was accompanied by many compliments and expressions of their respect for me.

This calumny did me no harm, but it caused a good deal of talk. I was furious with the Duke de Mortemart; and, son-in-law though he was to M. de Beauvilliers, whose friendship was so valuable to me in every way, I determined to insult him the first time I met him. He had been at Paris since the Court came back from Marly; I awaited his return to Versailles with impatience. Madame de Saint-Simon, though I was careful to say nothing of my intentions to her or to any one else, became uneasy, and told the whole story to the Duke de Charost, an intimate friend of ours, begging him to repeat it to M. de Beauvilliers. The latter immediately came to see me. He expressed himself most kindly, going so far as to say that, if he had to choose between us, he would give up his son-in-law. He sent for the Duke de Mortemart; who, with a great show of surprise and indignation, absolutely denied having attributed any such language to me. M. de Chevreuse and M. de Beauvilliers reported this denial to me, and offered to bring the Duke de Mortemart to repeat it in my presence. But he never came; and the two sisters adhered firmly to their original statement. I do not know how the Duke de Mortemart got out of his difficulty with them; but so far as I was concerned the affair remained in this position. Whenever we met I treated him coldly and contemptuously, and he looked confused and embarrassed. The Duke de Beauvilliers was so much annoyed with his son-in-law for refusing to come to me that he forbade him to appear in his house when I was present;

M. and Madame de Chevreuse did the same ; so that he never entered their rooms when I was there, and if I came in he went out immediately. This went on for several years, without making any difference to my intimacy with his mother and other members of his family. I shall have occasion to speak again of this Duke de Mortemart. I must do La Feuillade the justice to say that he took my part openly, and gave the true version of the story whenever he had the opportunity ; although I had not spoken to him on the subject, and our acquaintance was of the slightest.

M. d'Avaux died about this time. He had been a very handsome man, gallant, and honourable ; with much ability, and the politeness and manners of a man accustomed to the best society. After filling various diplomatic posts he was appointed Ambassador to Holland, not long after the peace of Nimeguen. He became aware of the designs of the Prince of Orange on England, and sent repeated warnings to the King ; but unfortunately our Government preferred to trust Barillon, our Ambassador in England, who, deceived by Sunderland and other perfidious Ministers of James II, assured our King that d'Avaux's fears were chimerical. D'Avaux, however, continued to send such precise details of the plot, that we had only ourselves to thank if it succeeded ; all that was necessary was to lay siege to Maestricht, which would have disconcerted the projects of the Prince of Orange, instead of undertaking the purposeless siege of Philipsburg. But Louvois wished for a war, and took good care not to do anything to prevent it. Besides his general design of making himself supreme in the Government by means of the increased importance of his Department of War, he had a private reason for desiring war which I have heard from trustworthy sources. It is too singular to be omitted, especially as an occasion for putting it on record presents itself naturally.

The King, who had given up his mistresses and was fond of building, had pulled down the little porcelain Trianon which he had built for Madame de Montespan, and was engaged in rebuilding it as it still exists. Louvois was Superintendent of Buildings. The King, who had a remarkably accurate eye, noticed that one of the windows was slightly narrower than the others ; the sides were only just raised, and not yet joined at the top. He pointed it

out to Louvois, who maintained that the window was perfectly correct. The King insisted that he was right ; but Louvois, who was obstinate, rough in his manners, and puffed up with authority, would not give in. Next morning the King saw Le Nôtre in the Gallery, whom he sometimes consulted about buildings, although officially his concern was only with the gardens. He asked him whether he had been to Trianon ; and, on his replying that he had not, ordered him to meet him there that afternoon, at the hour when he was to see Louvois. When he arrived there the question of the window was discussed again, Louvois still maintaining that it was of the same width as the others. The King ordered Le Nôtre to go and measure it, knowing that he was straightforward and truthful, and would report fairly. Louvois lost his temper and stormed ; the King was equally angry, but said nothing ; in the meantime Le Nôtre, who would gladly have been somewhere else, did not stir. At last, however, he had to go ; and the result of his examination was that the window turned out to be narrower than the others by some inches. Louvois tried to bully him ; but the King, losing patience, ordered him to be silent and to have the window reconstructed without delay ; and, contrary to his usual custom, reprimanded him very sharply.

What exasperated Louvois was that this scene took place, not only before workmen, but in the hearing of all the crowd of courtiers who were following the King in his walk. Unaccustomed to such treatment, he returned to his house beside himself with anger, and told the story to St. Pouenge and the rest of his family circle. He declared that he was a ruined man ; that for a mistake of a few inches in a window the King had forgotten all the services which had procured him so many conquests ; but that it should not happen again, for he would raise such a war as would compel the King to have recourse to him, and to lay aside the trowel. He soon kept his word. He began the war for the affairs of the double election to the bishopric of Cologne ; he embittered it by carrying fire and sword into the Palatinate, and made it more general by doing nothing to prevent the English Revolution ; he did his best to make it perpetual by driving the Duke of Savoy to desperation, although he sincerely wished for peace ; treating him, unknown to the King, with such indignity that he forced him into the ranks of our enemies ; to become, owing to the position of his

country, one of our most dangerous opponents. All this has been clearly proved since.

To return to d'Avaux. After the rupture with Holland he went to Ireland with James II, as French Ambassador. He was not very successful, but it was through no fault of his own; for that monarch was always deceived, and fell into every trap laid for him, in spite of d'Avaux's advice and his own former experience. Events showed the correctness of d'Avaux's judgement. He was, however, nearly ruined by a gross blunder. He had to send despatches to two Ministers, those of War and Foreign Affairs. All reports concerning military affairs went to Louvois; but such as had to do with the plans of the King of England, the deliberations of his Council, the interior affairs of Ireland, and English news, went to Croissy, an old friend and colleague of his. His appointment really depended on Croissy; it was only by accident that he had to correspond with Louvois; so his interest and inclination both led him to side with Croissy, who was Louvois' enemy. He wrote a letter to Croissy in which he spoke his mind freely about Louvois; unfortunately, his secretary addressed it to Louvois, and a despatch intended for the latter to Croissy. Louvois was furious; and Croissy himself found his position shaken; d'Avaux was ruined, and had to ask for his recall, which was granted. Luckily for him, Louvois' favour was rapidly declining, and only his sudden death saved him from being arrested. It was a fortunate escape for d'Avaux.

After this he was sent as Ambassador to Sweden. The Count d'Avaux, decorated with the blue ribbon, was held in high esteem there; he was successful in renewing some treaties, and rendered useful service. Unfortunately, some indiscreet or malicious Frenchman arrived at the Court of Stockholm, and made fun of their credulity, letting out the fact that this nobleman was merely a man of the gown, by no means a Knight of the Holy Ghost, and his blue ribbon only the insignia of a venal office which no man of the sword would accept. The Swedes are proud; they considered themselves slighted; d'Avaux, whose manners had pleased them till then, was no longer agreeable to them; and the mortifications he experienced hastened his return. In 1701 he was again sent to The Hague, in the vain hope of averting the war; but, though he had many friends there, and was personally agreeable to King William, he could not

prevent a rupture. On his return he submitted to an operation for the stone, and, though he was unwilling to believe it, the after-effects rendered him incapable of further service.

He was a very agreeable man ; but, from long habit and the good opinion he had of himself, he always wanted to have a hand in everything, and especially to be looked upon as a distinguished personage. With all his good qualities, a petty affectation rendered him ridiculous. As already said, he was a man of the gown, and had passed through all the different degrees of the magistracy ; but, having become accustomed in foreign countries to wear a sword and be called the Count d'Avaux, he could not bear to lay aside these distinctions on his return, or resume the dress of his profession. Much to his disgust, he had to dress in black, for he did not venture to wear grey or to use gold lace ; still, with his blue ribbon worn over his shoulder, and a dirk with a silver hilt by his side, he could fancy that he was taken for a Knight of the Order in mourning by people who knew no better. But what he could not bear was that he had to attend meetings of the Council wearing his gown, with his blue ribbon round his neck ; while other Councillors were there in *justaucorps* of grey or some other colour, with swords by their sides ; in other words, in their ordinary costume. His conduct contrasted unfavourably with that of Courtin and Amelot, who had also served as Ambassadors for a long time ; but who, after their return, resumed the dress and functions of their order. The Chancellor de Pontchartrain could not stand d'Avaux's pretences ; he longed to speak to him about them ; but the King saw it all, and, though he laughed at d'Avaux, he was kind enough to let him go on. He had a return of the stone, and a second operation killed him. He had many friends, and was highly respected in spite of his absurdities.

He was followed within a month by his first cousin, the widow of the Marshal-Duke de Vivonne. She was a woman of considerable ability, and an odd wit which made her worthy of marrying into the family of Mortemart. She was very rich ; and the Mortemarts, from generation to generation, were in the habit of ruining themselves and then feathering their nests by rich marriages. As for Madame de Vivonne and her husband, they had nothing to reproach each other with on that score, for they vied with

each other as to which could get through their money the quickest. I have heard their contemporaries say that it was extremely funny to see them together ; but it did not often happen, for they had no great esteem for each other. M. de Vivonne had quarrelled with his son, the Duke de Mortemart, whom I have heard highly spoken of by his brothers-in-law, the Dukes de Chevreuse and de Beauvilliers, and who received several millions from the King on the occasion of his marriage with Colbert's third daughter. When M. de Mortemart was on his death-bed M. de Seignelay, with great difficulty, induced M. de Vivonne to go and see him. He went into the room, and, leaning against a table, stood gazing on the dying man. All the family were in great grief. After a long silence M. de Vivonne said, all of a sudden : " That poor fellow will not get over it ; I saw his poor father die in exactly the same way ! " The scandal which this speech caused may be imagined, for the " father " he alluded to was one of his own grooms ! He was not in the least put out of countenance, but, after remaining a little longer in silence, left the room.

M. de Vivonne was the most amusing man in the world, and the wittiest. I have heard the King tell a hundred funny stories about him ; he delighted in telling them. Madame de Vivonne had also lived in the King's familiar circle ; he could not do without her company, but he was very far from having it whenever he liked. She was proud, capricious, and independent ; caring nothing for favour, but only for her own amusement. Madame de Montespan and Madame de Thianges were careful how they treated her ; whereas she showed them no deference whatever. There were often disputes between them, which produced most amusing scenes. She was passionately fond of play, even in the last years of her life, when she had become as pious as it was possible for her to be. Owing to her own extravagance, and that of her husband, who died in 1688, she had nothing to live on but a pension which the King gave her. She used to lodge in the house of her steward, with a very small establishment, and there she used to play for trifling stakes. She was treated with deference to the last, but not much regretted.

Boisseuil died about the same time. He was a gentleman by birth ; tall and stout in person, and had been very handsome in his time ; an excellent horseman, and a good judge

of horses. He broke in all the King's horses, and was practically in command of the Great Stable, because Brionne, the chief equerry, never performed the duties of his office. In this way Boisseuil had made himself very agreeable to the King, who always treated him with distinction. He was an honest man, and very brave; by nature he was respectful, and knew his place, but he had been spoilt by the implicit confidence reposed in him by the Grand Equerry and Madame d'Armagnac, which he always retained. He had contrived to bring them into subjection, and, with the exception of the emoluments, which Madame d'Armagnac looked after herself, to her great advantage, he had made himself so completely the Master of the Great Stable that he was looked upon as everything, and the Count de Brionne as nothing.

Boisseuil was very rough in his manners, a great gambler, and very hot-tempered; giving way to anger, and swearing in the saloon at Marly as if he had been in a pothouse. People were afraid of him; when rendered furious by bad luck at cards, he would say to women anything that came into his head. He used often to treat the Grand Equerry and Madame d'Armagnac, proud as they were, in a way which made the company feel quite uncomfortable. Once, during a journey of the King's, the Court remained for some time at Nancy, and Boisseuil sat down to play in a house belonging to somebody about the Court. A person present was playing very high; Boisseuil was losing heavily and in a bad temper accordingly. He thought he detected this person cheating; he was a man only known and tolerated in society on account of his play. He seized his hand, with the cards which he was about to deal; the gambler tried to withdraw it and grew angry, but Boisseuil was the stronger of the two; he told the other that he was a rogue, and he would prove it, and, shaking out the cards by force, showed the company clearly that the man had been cheating. The gambler got up in confusion, and went away. As Boisseuil was leaving the house afterwards he found a man waiting for him; it was the gambler, who called upon him to give him satisfaction for the insult. Boisseuil replied that he would not give him satisfaction, for he was a rascal. "Very possibly," said the other; "but I do not like people to tell me so!" Thereupon they went and fought immediately. Boisseuil received two sword-thrusts, one of which nearly

killed him ; the gambler, who, according to Boisseuil's account, fought very well, made his escape without a scratch. Everybody heard of this adventure, the King among the first ; but he good-naturedly took no notice, and accepted Boisseuil's wound as an ordinary illness. Boisseuil was never married ; he was not rich, but comfortably off. His countenance, which always looked furious, struck terror, with great red eyes starting out of his head.

CHAPTER XI

1709

Death of the Prince of Conti—His character—His pious end—His funeral—Etiquette at the funeral ceremonies—M. le Duc in vain attempts some encroachments—Wretched condition of the country—My schemes for a reform of the Government—M. de Chevreuse consults me—He confides to me his own plans, which are almost identical with my own—His astonishment—M. de Beauvilliers in danger of dismissal—Madame de Maintenon's plan for introducing Harcourt to the Council—I discover it accidentally, and warn M. de Beauvilliers—My advice to him—He is restored to favour—Disappointment of Harcourt—Negotiations for peace—Chamillart and Torcy at cross-purposes—Dispute between Chamillart and Desmarets.

THE Prince of Conti died on the 21st of February, after a long illness which ended in dropsy. He had been put on a milk diet for his gout, and for some time the treatment was successful, but eventually his stomach revolted against it; his doctor, however, insisted on his going on with it, and it killed him. When too late he obtained permission to send to Switzerland for a French refugee named Trouillon, an excellent physician, who said, directly he saw him, that the case was hopeless. He had not completed his forty-fifth year.

His face, in his younger days, had been charming. His shoulders were too high; his head was bent slightly to one side; he had a laugh which sounded like a bray; and he was extraordinarily absent-minded¹; and yet there was something strangely attractive about him in spite of these defects. Gallant with all women, he had been in love with a few, and had received favours from many; but he was equally anxious to please those of his own sex. He would take as much pains to make himself agreeable to a cobbler, a lackey, or a chair-

¹ When he started on his expedition to Hungary, he shut up his little dog in a strong-closet, intending to lock up his despatch-box. A strange noise was heard in his room; the servants, on entering, found his despatch-box open, and his papers all lying about, while howls proceeded from the strong-closet, which had to be broken open to release the unfortunate dog! (St. Simon's additions to *Dangeau's Journal*).

man, as to a Minister of State, a great nobleman, or a General in command of an army ; and his manner was so frank and natural that he never failed to attain his object. He was the delight of the Court and society, the idol of the people and the common soldiers. To the officers he was a hero ; the most distinguished among them placed all their hopes in him. He was popular with the Parliament ; a judicious friend to men of learning ; very often he extorted the admiration of the Sorbonne, of the most profound lawyers, astronomers, and mathematicians. His was a great intellect, clear, penetrating, and comprehensive ; his reading was prodigious, and he forgot nothing ; he had a thorough knowledge of history, and had studied genealogies to good purpose, so that he could distinguish what was true in them from what was merely chimerical. His memory was very accurate ; he could always quote his authority for what he had learnt ; in the same way he remembered all that he heard in conversation, without the slightest confusion or mistake, and estimated it at its true value with singular correctness of judgement.

M. de Montausier and the Bishop of Meaux, who watched over his education jointly with that of Monseigneur, always loved him tenderly ; and he had an affectionate confidence in them. He was on the same footing with the Dukes de Chevreuse and de Beauvilliers, the Archbishop of Cambrai, and Cardinals d'Estrées and Janson. M. le Prince, the hero, did not conceal that he loved him better than his own children ; and it was the Prince of Conti who consoled him in his last years. During his banishment, when he took refuge with M. le Prince, he learnt a great deal from him ; and recorded some curious facts under his direction. He was the intimate friend and confidant of M. de Luxembourg during the last years of his life. He chose his friends well, and knew how to live with them and put himself on their level, without pride, yet without any loss of dignity ; he also had friends of the other sex with whom there was never any question of love-making. In love he was accused of having more than one propensity ; it was one of those points in which he was supposed to resemble Julius Cæsar.

In society his manners were extremely gracious and polite ; but he understood how to regulate his politeness according to the age, rank, or services of the person to whom he was talking. He gave each person his due, and never

failed in the social courtesies which the Princes of the Blood ought to pay, though they have ceased to do so. Indeed he often talked on this subject, and spoke of their usurpations and the gradual change in manners. His wit was brilliant and natural; his repartees prompt and funny, but never such as to hurt the feelings of any one; always gracious and unaffected, his conversation had the easy charm which comes of long association with the Court, with the world, and with women. In war he had the courage and bearing of the heroes of antiquity; he also had their simplicity of manners, which nevertheless concealed a good deal of art. With this comparison it might seem that I had put the finishing touch to his portrait; but, like all other men, he had another side to his character.

This man, so amiable, so charming, so seductive, never really cared for any one; he wished to have friends, and he had them, just as one may wish for and procure pieces of furniture. Though he always respected himself, he was at heart a sycophant; he was all things to all men, and showed too clearly how necessary popularity was to him. He was miserly, greedy of gain, unjust, a bitter enemy. The contrast between his behaviour in the affair of Poland and in that of Neufchâtel did him no honour; nor did his lawsuit with Madame de Nemours, and the manner in which he carried it on. Still less creditable to him was his unworthy way of fawning on the bastards, whose rank was odious to him; and, indeed, on any one who might by any possibility be of use to him. It must be confessed, however, that in this respect he was not nearly so bad as M. le Prince.

The King could not refuse to treat him with a certain amount of respect; but it was against the grain, and he was careful not to go an inch beyond what was absolutely necessary. He had never forgiven his expedition to Hungary. The intercepted letters¹ which had been written to him there, and caused the ruin of the writers, had kindled the hatred of Madame de Maintenon and the indignation of the King to such a degree that nothing could efface the recollection. Even the Prince's talents and attractions, and the universal affection which he had acquired, became crimes in their eyes, on account of the contrast between

¹ The King had the curiosity to intercept a number of letters to and from young men who had gone to Hungary. He found evidence of shocking depravity among the youth of the Court.

him and M. du Maine. The purity of his blood was another demerit, for he was the only member of the royal family in which it was not tainted by an alliance with bastardy. It was sufficient to be his friend to be odious to the King, and this was well known; yet, in spite of their fears, the most servile courtiers liked to be in the Prince's society. To be allowed free access to him was a flattering distinction; the most distinguished and exclusive persons ran after him. Even in the saloon at Marly he was surrounded by a group of the choicest spirits about the Court. He used to converse there charmingly, on any subject which presented itself; old and young delighted to listen to him, he spoke so clearly and agreeably; yet he never talked merely for talking's sake. It is no figure of speech, but a literal fact, demonstrated over and over again, that people forgot the hours for meals while listening to him. The King knew all this, and it annoyed him seriously; at times he was not sorry that people should perceive his annoyance. But not even his displeasure could break the courtiers of the habit of assembling round the Prince of Conti; the servility which was so prevalent even in the merest trifles lost its power in this matter. There never was a man who concealed so much art under such simplicity of manner, yet there was not the slightest affectation about him; everything fell from him quite naturally, and everything came easy to him. People knew that he really cared for nobody; the other defects of his character were not ignored, but they were all forgiven. People really liked him; sometimes they reproached themselves for doing so, but they never escaped from the spell.

Monseigneur, in whose company he had been brought up, retained as much affection for him as he was capable of feeling for anybody; but he was equally fond of M. de Vendôme, and his Court was divided between the two. The King sided with M. de Vendôme in everything. They were therefore rivals, and the rapid elevation of Vendôme, with the preference given to him for the command of armies in the field, caused much bitterness between them, though they always treated each other with ordinary courtesy. The Duke of Burgundy had been brought up by persons favourably inclined to the Prince of Conti; and, though they did not allow it to appear outwardly, there was a real union between them, founded on mutual esteem and friendship.

The Duke of Orleans never got on well with the Prince of Conti ; his superiority of rank was offensive to the Princes of the Blood, and the Prince of Conti allowed himself to be led away by the other two. He and M. le Duc treated the Duke of Orleans too much like a school-boy during his first campaign, and did not show him sufficient deference and consideration during his second. There was also a certain rivalry in courage, wit, and acquirements which kept them apart. The Duke of Orleans never possessed the art of drawing people round him, and the perpetual buzz of conversation which went on round the Prince of Conti annoyed him extremely. A family love-affair put the finishing touch to his exasperation. Conti won the heart of a person,¹ who, though not cruel to others, was never really in love except with him. It was this affair which held him back from Poland. Her love long survived its object ; perhaps even after so many years it still lingers in the recesses of a heart which has nevertheless been abandoned to others.

M. le Prince could not help liking his son-in-law, whose conduct towards him was very dutiful. He had strong family reasons for not liking him ; but, in spite of passing clouds, his affection and esteem for him always got the upper hand. Madame la Princesse loved her son-in-law, and found in him her greatest consolation. With his wife he lived on becoming, and even friendly terms, though often plagued by her jealousy, caprice, and ill-humour. As for his son, young as he was, he could not bear him, and showed his dislike rather too plainly in his domestic circle. With his discernment of character, he perceived how he was going to turn out. He would have preferred to have no son ; and time has shown that he was right, except for the purpose of perpetuating his branch of the family. He loved his daughter, afterwards Duchess of Bourbon, tenderly ; as for the other one, he contented himself with treating her kindly.

M. le Duc and he had a mutual aversion for each other, the more bitter because their equality in age and rank and the double relationship between them had thrown them much together at Court, with the army, and even at Paris. To say nothing of very private reasons for dislike on the part of M. le Duc, there never were two men more unlike each

¹ Madame la Duchesse. The Duke of Orleans had also been one of her favoured lovers.

other. M. le Duc's jealousy of his brother-in-law's popularity went to the verge of madness ; and his fury was the greater because the Prince of Conti never would quarrel with him, but treated him with the utmost deference and respect. The Prince of Conti had not set foot in the house of Madame la Duchesse for twenty years before he died. She did not venture to send for news of him during his long illness, or even to ask openly how he was. She heard the reports privately ; usually through her sister, the Dowager-Princess of Conti. Her pregnancy and the birth of the Count de Clermont came in very usefully to enable her to conceal a grief which otherwise she might have showed too openly. This Princess of Conti always lived on the most affectionate and friendly terms with her brother-in-law. She did not take offence at his making up to Mademoiselle Choin, a duty to which the Prince of Conti had to submit like others.

With M. and Madame du Maine the Prince of Conti lived only on terms of the barest civility ; and he did not put much restraint on his tongue in speaking of them. Courtier though he was, he could not always deny himself the pleasure of touching the King on a tender spot, and in a way which he could not very well resent openly. He could not forget that his long perseverance in attentions and self-abasement had utterly failed to overcome the King's dislike. It was this implacable resentment which killed him in the end. He was driven to despair at seeing himself passed over for the most insignificant appointments, not to speak of the command of armies ; he was the only Prince of the Blood without any function, not even a governorship or the coloneley of a regiment, while the others, and the bastards in particular, were loaded with favours. In the end he sought to drown his disappointment in wine and other pleasures no longer suitable to his age, especially as his body was already somewhat enfeebled by the excesses of his youth. He became a martyr to gout. Deprived of his pleasures, and suffering in both body and mind, his health gave way, and, to add to his cup of bitterness, he saw a glorious and certain prospect open to him just when he was unable to enjoy it. We have seen that he had been selected to command the troops of the League of Italy. That project was soon abandoned ; but Chamillart, who, though obstinate and not very clear-sighted, had an honest French heart, thought

the moment opportune to restore the spirit of our army in Flanders by placing it under the command of a Prince whose reputation was even more brilliant than his birth. As the King and Madame de Maintenon had so far overcome their prejudice against the Prince of Conti as to nominate him for Italy, he thought they might be induced to send him to Flanders; he used all his influence to bring it about, and with a good deal of trouble he prevailed.

Conti was beside himself with joy; he had never put much faith in the League of Italy, and had seen that project gradually abandoned. He had accordingly given up all thought of employment; and Chamillart's announcement filled him with the most delightful hopes. But it was too late; his health was ruined; he soon recognised it himself, and this tardy gleam of favour only served to embitter his last moments. Contrary to the usual fate of persons in his position, he had been piously brought up, and well instructed in religion. The disorders of his life had clouded his religious perceptions, but they were not extinct; he had indeed kept them alive by reading books adapted to that object. He selected Father de la Tour to prepare him for his last moments. He was so strongly attached to life, especially since his worldly hopes had revived, that he stood in need of all his courage. For three months his house was thronged with visitors, and a crowd of the common people filled the square in front of it. The churches resounded with prayers for him, offered up by all classes, from the highest to the lowest; it happened several times that servants sent by his wife and daughters to engage priests to say Masses for him went from church to church, and found them all already engaged by others on his behalf. Such flattering anxiety was never shown to any one; people both at Court and in Paris were continually inquiring after his health; passers-by in the streets were stopped to ask if they had heard anything. A slight amendment set in, but gave little real hope; while it lasted everybody tried to amuse him as well as they could. He listened to them, but went on seeing Father de la Tour, and his thoughts were always with him. The Duke of Burgundy had a long interview with him, for which he was very grateful. But he soon had a relapse, and received the Holy Sacrament several times, in a most pious frame of mind.

It so happened that, on one occasion, Monseigneur was driving along one side of the river by the Louvre on his way

to the Opera, while along the opposite quay the Holy Sacrament was being carried to the Prince of Conti. The Duchess of Burgundy was so much shocked that she went into his box, and told the Duchess du Lude what had happened. It caused a very painful sensation in Paris and at Court. Mademoiselle de Melun, who had been introduced into Monseigneur's familiar circle by the Princess of Conti and Madame la Duchesse, was the only person bold enough to do him the service of telling him what was thought of this ill-timed visit to the Opera. She advised him to make up for it by going to see the Prince of Conti, which up to that time it had not occurred to him to do. Monseigneur did so, but his visit was very short.

Towards the end the Prince refused to see any one except Father de la Tour ; M. Fleury, formerly his tutor, who wrote an admirable " Ecclesiastical History," and one or two other religious persons. He retained his presence of mind up to the last moment, and turned it to good account. He died in his arm-chair, in a most pious frame of mind ; I have heard Father de la Tour quote things which he said worthy of the highest admiration. His death caused bitter and universal grief ; his memory is still held dear. Yet, if the truth must be told, it is possible that in reality he lost nothing by being out of favour. Brave as he was, his moral courage was not remarkable. Great things were expected of him, but possibly he might have turned out a timid commander ; in the King's Council, if he had entered it, it is probable that his timidity would have been still more apparent.

The King and Madame de Maintenon felt his death as a relief, and M. le Duc infinitely more so. Monseigneur heard of it at Meudon just as he was going out hunting. To all appearance the news did not affect him in the smallest degree.

The Prince of Conti had given directions that he should be buried at St. André-des-Arcs, by the side of his virtuous mother, whom he had always loved and venerated ; and that the funeral ceremonies should be as simple as possible. I suspected that the pride of M. le Duc would not be content to keep within the prescribed limits ; I therefore begged Desgranges, Master of the Ceremonies in the absence of Dreux, the Grand Master, to arrange so that I should have nothing to do on the occasion. It turned out that I was quite right. M. le Duc contrived that the holy water should

be given in the form reserved exclusively for the first Prince of the Blood, and Princes superior to him in rank, but never used for any other Prince of the Blood. Accordingly, on the 27th of February, the Duke d'Enghien, representing the King, and the Duke de la Trémouille, nominated by the King to represent the Dukes, drove in one of the King's carriages from the great court of the Tuileries to the Hôtel de Conti, accompanied by an escort of the horse-guards. They were met by M. le Duc and the new Prince of Conti, with the Dukes de Luxembourg and de Duras, who had been invited as relations ; all four abreast, in long cloaks, their trains borne by four gentlemen. The Duke d'Enghien was received with the same honour as would have been accorded to the King in person ; the Abbé de Maulévrier, the King's Almoner on duty, dressed in his rochet, presented him with the holy-water sprinkler ; while others were presented to M. le Duc, the Prince of Conti, and the three Dukes. When the prayers were concluded the Duke d'Enghien and the Duke de la Trémouille retired, with the same ceremonial, and returned to the Tuileries. During the whole ceremony the Hôtel de Conti was surrounded by the body-guards, as if the King had been present in person.

Two days afterwards I heard that I was reported to have expressed dissatisfaction at not being nominated instead of the Duke de la Trémouille, and to have said that he was sure to make some ignorant blunder. This was said of me at the house of M. de Bouillon at Versailles, in the presence of M. de la Trémouille. He merely laughed, and, drawing four pistoles from his pocket, offered to bet that I had said nothing of the sort. The bet was not accepted. I was very grateful to M. de la Trémouille for this mark of his confidence ; I had never thought he was likely to make mistakes ; if I had, I should not have said so ; and, as he was my senior, I could feel no jealousy about his nomination, even if I had wished to take part in the ceremony. I was glad, however, that I had taken the precaution of speaking to Desgranges before-hand ; I told people that I had done so, and got him to corroborate me. I never found out who started this report ; but I used strong language about the person, whoever he might be, and nobody thought fit to take it on himself.

No Prince of the Blood having died for a long time—that is, since M. le Prince, the hero, in 1686—M. le Duc thought

this a good opportunity to introduce some innovations tending to glorify the Princes of the Blood at the expense of the Dukes, who never learn wisdom by experience, and are easily taken in. He tried to have the body of the Prince of Conti guarded by Dukes, and succeeded in inducing two or three to do so, among them the Duke de Villeroy ; but Marshal de Villeroy got wind of what was going on, and made such a fuss that M. le Duc had to abandon his design hastily. He dared not show that he was angry, for the idea of having the body guarded at all was ridiculous. The bodies of Queens and Daughters or Granddaughters of France are guarded by Duchesses and foreign Princesses alternately, but it is never done in the case of Princes ; even the King's body is guarded only by the principal officers of his household. Then M. le Duc tried to have the body carried to the church in a coach. He had to give up this also, getting out of the difficulty by quoting the late Prince's injunctions against superfluous pomp. He should have thought of that a little sooner. Finding himself thwarted on these points, he next proposed that Dukes invited to the ceremony should attend in mourning-cloaks. M. de Luxembourg and M. de la Rocheguyon flatly refused ; which incensed M. le Duc to such a degree that he flew into a passion and used threats. In his vexation he determined not to attend the funeral at all, the more readily because he was not on very good terms with his sister¹ ; he sent the Duke d'Enghien in his place, wearing a long mourning-cloak. No invitations were sent out ; any one who chose, Dukes among the rest, went to the Church of St. André to await the arrival of the corpse ; but every one was in simple mourning, no cloaks being worn.

Subsequently a superb service was held in the church, to which only Bishops and relations received formal invitations, but which nevertheless was attended by crowds. M. le Duc, the Duke d'Enghien, and the Prince of Conti were present. A prelate officiated, and Father Massillon, of the Oratory, preached an admirable funeral sermon. The Bishops present were dissatisfied because they were not given arm-chairs, but after a slight protest they remained on the benches assigned to them. The invariable rule at these ceremonies is that each person receives the treatment to which he was entitled in the presence of the Prince whose

¹ The Princess of Conti.

obsequies are being celebrated. For that reason the Dukes present ought to have been provided with arm-chairs similar in every respect to those of the Princes of the Blood ; but M. le Duc, always on the watch to gain some advantage, had suppressed them. There were only three arm-chairs set out for the three Princes ; for the Dukes, nothing but plain benches. The first arrivals protested, but M. le Duc took no notice. Soon afterwards the Dukes de Luxembourg, de la Melleraye, and de la Rocheguyon came in, and made the same protest ; M. le Duc said, by way of excuse, that he did not know where arm-chairs were to be procured, whereupon the three Dukes declared that they, and all the other Dukes, would leave the church at once. This prompt declaration took M. le Duc by surprise ; his intention had been to set a precedent by artifice, but he well knew that he could not openly refuse the arm-chairs. He protested that he had never thought of such a thing, but did not know how to remedy the mistake ; then, seeing that the Dukes were already making their bows preparatory to withdrawing, he stopped them ; and said he must see what could be done. Then his stratagem was at once unmasked, for arm-chairs were immediately forthcoming. M. le Duc apologised because there were not enough for all the Dukes present, but four or five were placed close to that of the Prince of Conti, and in the same line, while the others were put out with intervals between them, with one at the end of the line for the junior Duke. In this way all the seats in the intervals were considered to be arm-chairs for the occasion, and the Dukes who sat in them were supposed to be seated in arm-chairs. It will be seen that M. le Duc had kept some in reserve as a last resource. He was extremely angry at the failure of his stratagem. No one wore a mourning-cloak except the three Princes and the members of their households ; after what had passed on the subject on the occasion of the funeral they did not venture to suggest it.

My object in dwelling at such length on these ceremonies is merely to show that, not content with their exalted rank and the privileges justly accorded to it, the Princes of the Blood are always trying for something more. They spare neither stratagem nor violence to encroach upon the rights of others ; and when they have once contrived to establish a precedent they claim their usurped privileges as their just due.

During all this time the condition of the country was going from bad to worse, and that not by slow degrees but visibly, with constantly increasing velocity. The kingdom was utterly exhausted ; our troops were unpaid, and their spirits depressed because they were badly led and consequently always defeated ; the burden of the war was intolerable, yet peace seemed unattainable ; all classes were suffering, but they had to suffer in silence ; no one could be found bold enough to lay a sustaining hand on the tottering Ark of the State.

I had often talked over our misfortunes and their causes with the Dukes de Chevreuse and de Beauvilliers ; but the existing system of government was what they had always been accustomed to, and their caution and pious resignation did not encourage one to suggest remedies. I had, however, reflected deeply on the subject, and long ago had committed to paper some schemes for reform ; rather for my own amusement, and to relieve my feelings, than with any expectation of their ever coming to anything. I saw clearly that it was hopeless to expect wise and sound administration so long as the present system lasted ; I also saw how impossible it was to make a change, for the King would never hear of restrictions being placed on the authority of the Secretaries of State and the Controller-General, which he looked upon as his own ; nor would he ever be persuaded that he could safely admit any man to his Council unless he could give undeniable proofs of the lowness of his birth. The only exception was the President of the Council of Finance, and that was only because he had no direct influence in the administration. I had therefore condemned my notes to remain in darkness ; they had never seen the light, and I had confided them to nobody ; I considered my reforming projects as visionary as the Republic of Plato.

One afternoon M. de Chevreuse came to see me in a little room formerly belonging to the late Marshal de Lorge, which I used as my study. His mind was full of our misfortunes ; he began talking about them, and proposed that we should try to find some remedy. I asked him if he thought any were practicable. He was a man of a very hopeful disposition, and always acted accordingly ; that is, he always wanted to act, but was careful to keep his plan of action to himself. In this way he satisfied his love of reasoning without compromising himself in case his plans overstepped

the bounds of prudence. It was this which made me so reserved with him ; for I hated castles in the air, and trains of reasoning which led to nothing. My astonishment therefore was great when, becoming more and more open, he began to unfold the very same ideas which had previously occurred to me. He liked talking ; and talked well, clearly, and to the point ; people always listened to him with pleasure. I heard him with great attention, surprised to find that his schemes for reform were, with the exception of some trifling details, almost identical with my own. After a time he perceived my stupefaction ; he wanted me to speak in my turn, but I was so lost in astonishment that I could only answer in monosyllables. "But," said he at last, "do speak to me ! What is the matter with you to-day ? Tell me candidly, have I been talking nonsense all this time ?" Without answering a word I got up and unlocked a cupboard, took from it some small bundles of paper covered with my handwriting, and, presenting them to him, I said : "Here, sir, is the explanation of my silence and astonishment." He took them, looked them through, and found his own plans set down almost word for word. Never were two men more astonished than we were.

He had suggested a scheme for the reform of our administration ; here he saw it drawn up almost exactly on his own lines, with the addition of the minutest details. I had made out lists of various Councils, with the names of persons to be appointed to each, some of whom had since died. I had carefully set down their functions, the limitations of their authority, with those of the various Ministers ; finally, I had made out a statement of the salaries to be paid, so as to compare the expense of administration with that actually in force under the King. M. de Chevreuse was very much pleased with my detailed plans ; he approved of nearly all the persons I had selected, and was satisfied with the financial arrangements. We discussed the matter at great length, and found that we were in almost complete agreement. He begged me to lend him my papers, so that he might examine them at greater leisure. After about a week he returned them to me, having gone over them carefully with M. de Beauvilliers. They both came to the conclusion that my scheme required very little alteration, but that the difficulty would be to carry it into execution. As I had always foreseen, they both considered it impossible

during the King's lifetime, but they begged me to preserve my notes carefully for some future time when they might be useful ; that is, for the reign of the Duke of Burgundy.

It will be seen in the sequel that this scheme of mine was the origin of the Councils which were formed, but without sufficient care and consideration, after the King's death, in accordance with a plan found among the Duke of Burgundy's papers. My project eventually found its way to that Prince. If he had ascended the throne it would have been carried into effect, with some unimportant modifications, and so would several other schemes for reform. All this will be explained in due course.

While we were engaged in these discussions a serious and imminent danger was impending over the Duke de Beauvilliers, without his suspecting it in the slightest degree ; it was almost by a miracle that I discovered it in time ; for, though it was averted, there was literally not an hour to spare. I have already said that the reconciliation between Madame de Maintenon and M. de Beauvilliers was merely temporary ; it lasted so long as she required his assistance in defending the Duke of Burgundy against Vendôme's cabal, but she still owed him a grudge for having maintained his position in spite of her ; she continued to look upon him as an enemy, and was always on the watch for an opportunity to overthrow him. I have also remarked that, about the same time, Harcourt returned to Fontainebleau, and, having been consulted by Madame de Maintenon respecting the campaign in Flanders, had contrived to restore himself to her good graces ; for there had been a slight coolness between them. Madame de Maintenon had now avenged herself on Vendôme for the temporary loss of her influence with the King ; the Duchess of Burgundy, and consequently her husband, had been restored to favour ; and Vendôme had been publicly informed that his services were no longer required. From that moment the interviews between Madame de Maintenon and M. de Beauvilliers had ceased ; there was no longer any common object to bring them together, and she had gone back to her old designs. She was determined, if possible, to get Harcourt admitted to the Council, in order to have a Minister dependent on her ; for she had no one there whom she could trust since Chamillart had, as she considered, betrayed her. She intended to get rid of both Chamillart and M. de Beauvilliers ; and thought

that Harcourt, if admitted to the Council, would be able to give her powerful assistance in doing so. She managed to bring the King round to her views with regard to Harcourt and Beauvilliers. I will not affirm positively that he promised to dismiss Beauvilliers, though I have good reason to believe that it was so ; for I do not wish to make positive statements without being sure of my ground ; it is, however, quite certain that he promised to appoint Harcourt, though he was brought to consent with some difficulty ; for the objections which had deterred him on a former occasion were still in force.

The King thought if he made Harcourt a Minister with the usual formalities it would arouse the jealousy of other persons who might consider themselves equally qualified ; he preferred, therefore, to do it by stratagem, and make it seem as if the thing had happened by pure chance. It was agreed that, when next the Council met, Harcourt should chance to be present in the ante-chambers. Spanish affairs would come up for consideration ; the King would propose to ask Harcourt's advice, and immediately send a messenger out to see if he was anywhere about ; on Harcourt's making his appearance he would explain what he was sent for, and at once tell him to be seated. This would be equivalent to declaring him a Minister ; and he would be summoned to all future meetings of the Council.

I have already mentioned that I was extremely intimate with the Duke and Duchess de Villeroy ; the Duke, as I have also mentioned, had a *liaison* of long standing with Madame de Caylus, who was in all Madame de Maintenon's secrets, and also on intimate terms with her cousin Harcourt. Whether through sheer thoughtlessness, or whether he felt some jealousy on behalf of his father, the Marshal, the Duke de Villeroy told me the secret of Harcourt's approaching admission to the Council, and how it was to be effected ; he also let fall some words which seemed to be of sinister omen for the Duke de Beauvilliers. There was not a moment to be lost ; I got away from the Duke and Duchess de Villeroy as quickly as I could without arousing suspicion, went back to my room, and sent a confidential servant in search of M. de Beauvilliers, with orders to beg him to come to me at once. I sent word that I would explain why I did not go to him ; my reason was that I did not wish to go straight to him from the Duke de Villeroy's rooms, for in a

Court everything excites remark. In less than half an hour M. de Beauvilliers arrived, in some uneasiness. I asked him whether he had heard any news ; not to pump him, there was no occasion for that between us ; but to make him feel ashamed of the ignorance which had so often led him into snares. When I had made him thoroughly conscious of it, I told him what I had just heard. He was completely taken aback ; he had expected nothing of the sort. I had no difficulty in making him see that, even if his dismissal was not already settled, the admission of Harcourt to the Council was a step which must inevitably lead to it.

The question was, what should be done ; and it was urgent, for we had not more than twenty-four hours before us at the outside. He considered the case hopeless, and that there was nothing for it but to resign himself to the will of God ; for he thought there was not sufficient time to prevent the appointment of Harcourt, and recognised that it would be the signal for his own dismissal. He said he had noticed for some days that the King's manner with him was cold and embarrassed ; he had not thought much of it at the time, but the cause was now evident. I took the liberty of scolding him for his mistaken notions about Christian charity, which made him as blind and deaf to what was going on round him in the Court as if he had been shut up in a bottle. I reminded him of our conversation in the gardens of Marly, and my forebodings about the Duke of Burgundy's campaign in Flanders, which had made him so angry. Finally, I told him that it was his own fault if he had neglected his opportunities to such a degree that his only hold over the King was that he was accustomed to see him about his person, and coming in at any hour like one of the pages ; but, since he still had that hold over him and the privileges of the *entrées*, he must at any rate turn it to good account in his present dangerous situation. He listened attentively, without becoming angry ; then smiled, and said, in a way which showed his reliance on me : " Well, then, what do you think I had better do ? "

I replied that there was only one thing to do, the success of which would depend entirely on himself ; but, if done in a proper manner, I would guarantee that it would save him, even if it did not prevent Harcourt's appointment. I advised him to avail himself of his privileges by going to the King, early next morning, when alone in his private room,

and at once tell him that he had heard that M. d'Harcourt was about to be called into the Council, and the manner in which it was proposed to do it ; that he would not ask His Majesty's reasons for taking this step ; so far as he was personally concerned it was indifferent to him, but he feared the public service would suffer on account of the contempt which Harcourt openly expressed for the other Ministers, as His Majesty well knew ; his domineering manner, and his private quarrel with Torcy, which would cause embarrassment when foreign affairs came up for discussion ; that he thought it his duty to submit these considerations once more to His Majesty, although he repeated that he had no personal interest in the matter. I advised him to add, further, that he could not feel the same indifference about something else, which he had noticed for some days past ; and, with his strong personal affection for His Majesty, he could not refrain from opening his heart on the subject, though with all due submission and respect. Thereupon he should tell the King what he had observed in his manner towards himself, speaking with dignity, yet affectionately and with a touch of pathos ; adding that he cared nothing for office in itself, but only for His Majesty's esteem and approval ; that His Majesty had been so kind as to confer all his functions on him without his asking for them, or even thinking of such a thing, for which he felt sincere and affectionate gratitude ; and he was equally ready to resign them at any moment, if His Majesty thought it for the advantage of his service. In short, he was to overcome the King by a display of mingled respect, affection, disinterestedness, and gratitude. M. de Beauvilliers listened to me with pleasure, and embraced me warmly. He promised to follow my counsels, and to let me know the result.

I went to see him next day, and heard that he considered himself to be firmly on his legs again. He had spoken to the King exactly as I had advised. The King seemed much surprised ; and though he said nothing, it was easy to see that he was extremely angry at the secret of Harcourt's appointment having leaked out, down to the smallest details. I had calculated on this. He listened attentively to M. de Beauvilliers' brief remarks about the probable embarrassment which Harcourt's admission would produce in the Council. He seemed at first rather ill at ease when M. de Beauvilliers began talking about himself ; but his manner

soon became more open, and he interrupted him to assure him of his confidence and friendly esteem. When M. de Beauvilliers spoke of resigning his office he stopped him at once, with most kind expressions of regard ; and in the end seemed more friendly with him than ever. I have often heard from M. de Beauvilliers that the King's manner towards him after this audience was invariably kind and gracious. In short, this interview was a master-stroke. Whether M. de Beauvilliers would have been dismissed if it had not taken place is what I have never been able to ascertain for certain ; but, from what he told me of the King's manner at the beginning, I am almost convinced that he would.

Harcourt, who looked upon his appointment as settled, and could hardly conceal his pleasure, was in the King's antechambers at the time appointed. While the Council is sitting there is usually no one in these rooms except some inferior officers of the household, and now and then a courtier passing through from one wing of the château to the other. These officers of the household kept teasing Harcourt by asking if he wanted anything, or if they could do anything for him. He had to stay there ; yet he had no ostensible pretext for doing so ; he did not know what answer to make, but walked up and down, limping on his stick, an object of curiosity to all who passed by. At last, after waiting a long time, very ill at ease, he went away ; much disturbed in his mind at not having been sent for. Madame de Maintenon was also uneasy about it ; the more so because the King did not allude to the subject, and she did not venture to speak first. She comforted Harcourt by telling him that apparently no opportunity had arisen for consulting him about Spanish affairs, and advised him to be in attendance again when the Council had its next meeting. Harcourt took her advice, with the same result ; he went away much disappointed, and saw that his appointment had fallen through.

Madame de Maintenon was determined to find out what had happened ; she spoke to the King, assuming that he had forgotten about it, or that no opportunity had presented itself for consulting Harcourt, and taking for granted that the affair was still on the same footing. The King replied, with some embarrassment, that on further reflection he had come to the conclusion that, as Harcourt was on bad

terms with nearly all his Ministers, and treated them with ill-concealed contempt, his admission to the Council would give rise to quarrels which would be very unpleasant for him ; and on the whole he thought matters had better remain as they were. He added that he had a high opinion of Harcourt's capacity, and would consult him in private when he required his advice. He said this in such a way that Madame de Maintenon saw she was defeated, and said no more.

I had been quietly on the watch to see what would happen to Harcourt, and I was very glad when the long delay in summoning him made it clear that his affair had fallen through. I asked the Duke de Villeroy afterwards what was keeping back Harcourt's appointment ; and he told me the circumstances which I have just related, adding that the affair was at an end. I took care to show no particular interest in the matter ; for I was on friendly terms with Harcourt, who had made advances to me on several occasions ; but I was delighted that things had turned out as they did, and rejoiced in private with the Dukes de Chevreuse and de Beauvilliers. They had had a fortunate escape.

Marshal Boufflers fell dangerously ill in Flanders ; and, though he recovered, he felt that he was not equal to the command of an army in the field. He returned to Paris on the 1st of March, and told the King that he would be unable to serve during the approaching campaign. The King had expected this announcement ; he sent at once for Marshal Villars ; and it was given out that he would command the army of Flanders under Monseigneur ; the King of England, under his usual incognito, and the Duke of Berry, accompanying this army as volunteers ; Marshal d'Harcourt was to take command on the Rhine, under the Duke of Burgundy ; the Duke of Orleans in Spain ; Marshal Berwick in Dauphiné, and the Duke de Noailles in Roussillon, as usual. It will be seen that the Generals went to their respective destinations, but that none of the Princes left the Court.

The Count de Toulouse was ordered by the King to tell the Count d'Évreux that his services were dispensed with. The announcement was broken to him in this way, not so much out of regard for his father, as because the blow fell on M. de Vendôme quite as much as on himself. Since his return he had tried to make a protector of the Prince whom he had

so deeply offended, and he nearly succeeded ; but the Duchess of Burgundy showed such anger, and remonstrated so strongly with her husband, that he had to give it up. The whole cabal were bitterly mortified by this blow, which let them see that their plots were not forgiven, in spite of the chastisement already inflicted on Vendôme.

Count de Roucy, who had not been allowed to serve since the battle of Blenheim, and La Feuillade, disgraced since that of Turin, were among the leading spirits of Monseigneur's Court. They thought to soften the King by asking permission to accompany Monseigneur as volunteers. The King granted it to Roucy, but refused it to La Feuillade, who was bitterly mortified ; it came to the same thing in the end for both of them, for Monseigneur did not go to Flanders ; nor, consequently, did the Count de Roucy.

About the beginning of March Rouillé left for Holland on a secret mission to negotiate for peace ; it was so necessary to us that we flattered ourselves it was possible to obtain it. Bergheyck had been staying with Chamillart for a couple of days not long before, and he thought the Dutch were inclined to peace. Rouillé was a lawyer, brother to the Rouillé who became Director of Finance and Councillor of State, and whose debauchery, combined with much learning and some ability, made him so much talked about, especially during the Regency. This one was the younger brother ; he possessed a delicate and polished wit, and was as steady and temperate as his brother was the reverse ; he had been employed in several diplomatic negotiations, and latterly as Ambassador to Portugal. He always gave satisfaction, and continued to do so, in spite of his failure in this mission to Holland.

I must here insert two anecdotes characteristic of Chamillart, which were known to but few people at the time. He had heard so much of the way in which Louvois used to domineer over his colleagues and interfere in their departments that he had come to look upon this ascendancy as a prerogative of his office. This was the chief cause of his continual quarrels with Pontchartrain. He had even tried several times to interfere in the Chancellor's department ; but, as this was obviously beyond his competence, he had always been forced to desist. He now took it into his head to take the negotiations for peace out of the hands of Torcy, the Minister naturally responsible for them. With the

King's knowledge, he had emissaries in Holland and elsewhere, who made overtures and proposals, and spoke slightly of the agents employed by Torcy ; calling the latter a man of straw, with no real influence. Torcy's people were not slow to reply after the same fashion, so that any one would have thought these two sets of agents served different Sovereigns with diametrically opposite interests. This, of course, gave the persons to whom they were accredited a most mischievous impression of our Government, and rendered all attempts at negotiation futile.

Chamillart was guilty of the absurdity of sending Helvetius to Holland twice, under the pretext, which deceived nobody, of going to see his father, but in reality to negotiate. Helvetius was a Dutchman, a very clever doctor who was called a quack because he did not always conform to the conventional rules of his profession. He had a very large practice in Paris ; every day at certain hours he used to receive any poor people who chose to come, and prescribe for them gratis, besides giving them alms. Consequently he could not disappear without his absence becoming widely known, for all classes suffered by it. He was Chamillart's medical attendant, and all the jokes that were made on the subject of a quack doctor being called in to prescribe, and so on, were aimed at the Minister, not at himself ; for no one accused him of having volunteered his services.

Torcy was quite aware of the mischief done to the public service by Chamillart's interference, and by no means insensible to the personal slight ; but so long as Chamillart was at the height of his favour he did not venture to do more than make an occasional remonstrance through the Duke de Beauvilliers, which produced no effect. But when Chamillart's star was beginning to set, and he had been obliged to resign the administration of the finances in favour of his own first cousin, Torcy thought it time to assert himself. Convinced by long experience that he would obtain nothing by gentle methods, he told the Duke de Beauvilliers flatly that he was weary of Chamillart's meddling ; and that the King must decide which of them was to be his Minister for Foreign Affairs. Beauvilliers spoke to Chamillart very seriously on the subject ; and he, knowing that he would have the worst of it if the matter came before the King, promised to have nothing to do with foreign affairs in future. Torcy, had, however, been taken in too often to trust to a

verbal promise ; he insisted on having it in writing. Chamillart signed a formal declaration to that effect ; and Torcy, feeling himself once more at liberty, was reconciled with Chamillart, who never gave him any more trouble. I was too intimate with M. de Beauvilliers and Chamillart to be left in ignorance of all this ; as for Torcy, my intimacy with him did not begin till after the King's death. I now come to the other anecdote.

Since Chamillart had resigned his office as Controller-General he talked a good deal more about financial matters than he had ever done before ; and, now that he had been relieved of the burden, forgot how intolerable he had found it. All his energy was devoted to the Department of War which he still retained ; and he was continually applying to his successor for money, as if it were no longer any concern of his how it was to be procured. Desmarets, though at his wit's end, did what he could ; but at last, irritated at meeting with so little consideration from a man who could not have forgotten the wretched condition of the finances when he handed them over, he lost his temper ; and reproached him with being responsible for it. Chamillart laid his complaints before the King. This bandying of reproaches between Ministers was becoming too common ; the King was determined to put a stop to it, and spoke sharply to Desmarets ; who, forced in this way to justify himself, seized the occasion to unburden his mind. He gave the King a detailed report of all the sums furnished to Chamillart, showing the appropriation of each, and the manner in which payment had been made ; so much in coin, so much in bills, and so on. This showed that Chamillart's demands had been more than satisfied. Chamillart, in great astonishment, said there must have been a mistake on the part of some clerk ; but Desmarets, determined to justify himself and get to the bottom of the business, insisted on his accompanying him to his office, and going into it at once. De Soye, the clerk responsible for the payments made by the War Office, was sent for with his registers ; and the disputed sum was found to have been received at the time and in the manner stated by Desmarets. De Soye showed that it had been expended in the King's service ; but not for the particular service to which it had been appropriated. Chamillart had to apologise for the forgetfulness which had led him into such a mistake ; and, Desmarets'

triumph having restored his good temper, they parted with mutual politeness, agreeing to keep the matter secret so far as possible. But it had to be reported to the King, who was kind to Chamillart and made excuses for him ; for he knew that he was in bad health and overwhelmed with business ; and, moreover, his two journeys to Flanders had caused interruptions, and helped to confuse his mind. The public, however, did not judge him with the same leniency.

Soon after he assumed the entire responsibility for the finances Chamillart had taken a fancy to a financier named La Cour-des-Chiens, to whom he entrusted all the most lucrative transactions. In this way La Cour had become enormously rich ; he was clever and resourceful, and had done good service ; moreover, he was good-natured, obliging, and not so insolent as most people of his class. But his opulence and ostentation had irritated the public ; the other financiers were jealous of him ; and many unpleasant insinuations were now made against Chamillart and himself. At a time when money was urgently required to provide supplies for the troops, Chamillart, in his zeal for the public service, had made himself personally responsible for sundry payments. Conscious of his own integrity, and knowing that the King trusted him, he had no misgivings ; and La Cour, relying on the protection of the powerful Minister, had also entered into very heavy engagements. They were such that he could not meet them without extreme difficulty ; especially as he did not cut down his personal expenditure. All this, when the administration of the finances fell into other hands, gave rise to disagreeable attacks on Chamillart's management, and to heavy calls on La Cour's resources. Nothing disgraceful was imputed to Chamillart, but he was accused of having employed the funds in dispute to pay the debts for which he was personally liable, instead of applying them to the more urgent necessities of the war. I believe there was something in it ; and that the Minister, fearing lest he might not be in a position to meet at short notice the engagements which he had so imprudently taken on himself, had really diverted some of these funds from the services to which they were appropriated. But he never took a single pistole for his own private benefit ; and fortunately his reputation stood so high that such a suspicion never entered the head of any one.

After this dispute and explanation the relations between the two Ministers were on a footing of merely outward civility. I had feared from the beginning that it would turn out so, as I mentioned at the time. They were both of them still dear to me ; and I was as much grieved by their dissensions as M. de Chevreuse and M. de Beauvilliers.

CHAPTER XII

1709

Terrible severity of the winter—Fruit-trees and crops ruined—The scarcity of wheat made worse by ill-advised legislation—The Parliaments of Paris and Burgundy offer assistance—The King receives their suggestions with displeasure.—General poverty—Bankruptcy of Samuel Bernard—Marshal de Boufflers takes his seat as a Duke—Death of M. le Prince—His character—Anecdotes about him—His eccentricities—Dinner-parties of the dead—The Jesuits disappointed—Their revenge on a young lady—Innovations at the funeral—M. le Duc calumniates me in my absence—Origin of the names of M. le Prince, M. le Duc, Monsieur, Mademoiselle, and Monseigneur.

As I have already remarked, this was a terrible winter ; nothing approaching to it had been known during the memory of man. After a frost of two months, so sharp as to cover the sea along the coast with ice thick enough to bear loaded wagons, a false thaw set in and melted the snow which had hitherto covered the ground, after which the frost returned with its original severity, and lasted for three weeks longer. The cold was so intense that Hungary water and the strongest spirits were frozen and burst their bottles, even in rooms where there was a fire ; of which I myself saw several instances in the *château* of Versailles. As I was supping with the Duke de Villeroy in his little bedroom lumps of ice fell into our glasses as we poured out our wine, although the bottles had been standing on the chimney-piece, and there was only a very small ante-chamber between us and the kitchen, where there was a large fire. The second frost ruined everything. All the fruit-trees died ; there was not a walnut-tree, an olive-tree, an apple-tree, or a vine left, or so few as not to be worth mentioning. Numbers of other trees died ; gardens were destroyed ; all the autumn-sown corn perished. The misery caused by this universal desolation is inconceivable. Every one who had any grain in stock hoarded it carefully ; bread went up to famine prices. The most intelligent farmers resowed their ruined wheatfields

with barley ; but, unfortunately, the police took it into their heads to forbid the practice ; and though they ultimately withdrew the prohibition it was then too late. Several edicts respecting corn were published ; the Government laid in large stocks, and commissioners were sent throughout the provinces ; but the only result of these measures was to increase the scarcity and raise the price of wheat. It was suspected that the administrators of the finances were buying up grain all over the country to sell it again at an increased price for the King's profit, not forgetting their own. However that might be, it is certain that the price of wheat was fixed by authority in all the markets of the kingdom ; at Paris commissioners sometimes raised the price against the will of the vendors ; and in a market close to my house, near St. Germain-des-Près, when the people cried out, asking how long this dearness would last, some of these commissioners, moved by pity and indignation, made the significant reply : " Just so long as you choose ! " They meant that it would last just so long as the people chose to put up with the regulation by which no wheat could enter Paris without the permission of Argenson, the Lieutenant of Police. All the Intendants throughout the kingdom did in their jurisdictions what d'Argenson was doing at Paris ; in every market such wheat as was left unsold at the regulation price had to be removed at the closing of the market ; persons who from motives of compassion sold for a lower price were severely punished.

Maréchal, the King's surgeon, was bold and honest enough to tell him what a sinister impression was produced on public opinion in all ranks of society by these measures ; the King seemed grieved, and was not displeased with Maréchal, but nothing came of it. The Parliament of Paris, alarmed at the state of the country, deliberated on the subject in their Grand Chamber, and offered the King to send commissioners at their own expense throughout the district to make inquiries, search out accumulations of corn, and assist the police generally in punishing those who contravened the edicts ; they forwarded a list of members willing to undertake the task, with the districts assigned to them. When the King heard of it he was strangely incensed with the Parliament, and was with difficulty dissuaded by the Chancellor from reprimanding them harshly ; as it was, he sent them word to confine themselves to judging law-

suits, and not meddle with such matters. Accustomed as the Parliament was to humiliations, this one was acutely felt ; and though the King's order was obeyed, it was not without murmuring. Much indignation was felt by the public ; for it was suspected that the rebuff was owing to the fact that the Government's own hands were not clean, otherwise the offers made by the Parliament would have been thankfully accepted, as useful to the King's service, without any encroachment on that absolute and boundless authority concerning which he was so jealous.

The Parliament of Burgundy also took the necessities of the province into deliberation ; but though the debate was conducted with great caution, and nothing was said not absolutely germane to the subject, the King was extremely angry. This Parliament received a severe reprimand ; and its President was sent for to Court, to give an account of his conduct. The King threatened to deprive him of his office as *président-à-mortier* ; but, owing to the joint efforts of the Chancellor and M. le Duc, Governor of Burgundy, this magistrate, whose conduct had been quite irreproachable, was let off with a sharp scolding, and returned to Dijon after an absence of some weeks. The people there intended to give him a triumphal reception, which, like a wise man, he thought it better to evade ; so he arranged his journey in such a way as to arrive at Dijon at five o'clock in the morning. With these examples before their eyes, the other Parliaments submitted in trembling to the Intendants and their emissaries.

In addition to all this, public credit was shaken ; the payment of interest on the most solid securities became irregular ; even the dividends on the stock of the Hôtel-de-Ville, hitherto regarded as almost sacred, fell into arrears ; to the great distress of nearly every family in Paris, and many others. At the same time taxes were multiplied, increased, and most rigorously collected. Everything became incredibly dear ; but, even if prices had been low, there was no money to buy anything. Many people who had helped the poor during previous years now found the utmost difficulty in providing for themselves ; many were reduced to receiving charity in secret. Many even sought the shelter of the hospitals, formerly the last dreaded refuge of the poor ; but the hospitals themselves were ruined, and had to turn out their inmates, to die literally of hunger. It is impossible to say

how many honest families were expiring in garrets. It must be said also that all this misery gave an immense stimulus to charity ; the amount of money given in alms was incredible. But, as the distress became worse and worse, the indiscreet zeal of the Government devised a special tax for the relief of the poor. This tax, coming on the top of so many others, had the effect of crushing the taxpayers, and, to a very great extent, of drying up the stream of voluntary alms ; moreover, the proceeds were badly administered, and the poor were not nearly so well relieved as they had been before.

What seems strange, to put it mildly, is, that this tax has been perpetuated ; and though it has been diverted from its original object, is still collected under the same name, as a regular branch of the public revenue. The same thing has happened with the tax for the maintenance of the high-roads ; it is still collected under that designation, but applied to other purposes. Many bridges throughout the kingdom were broken, and the roads had become almost impassable. Lescalopier, Intendant of Champagne, attempted to repair them by forced labour, not even giving the labourers bread ; and his example was commended and widely followed. The consequence was that numbers of the workmen employed died of hunger and misery ; the scheme had to be abandoned, and the roads were left to go to ruin. None the less, the tax imposed for keeping them up was regularly collected while the forced labour was going on ; and so it has been ever since.

It was impossible to understand where all the money in the kingdom had disappeared. No one could pay his debts, because no one received what was due to him ; the country people, ruined by their losses and crushed by taxation, were all bankrupt. Commerce was exhausted, and yielded nothing ; credit and confidence were entirely at an end. The only resource left to the King was the terror inspired by his unbounded authority ; but, unlimited as it was, it failed to raise revenue, because all the sources of revenue were dried up. There was no money left in the kingdom, and no means of procuring any. Even the troops were unpaid, and yet no one could imagine what became of all the millions which had been poured into the King's coffers.

Such was the terrible condition of our affairs when Rouillé, and Torcy a little later, went to Holland to negotiate for



Madame de Maintenon

peace. The picture I have drawn is exact, faithful, and by no means exaggerated. It was necessary to draw it from nature ; for without this description it would not be possible to realise the extremity to which we were reduced, or to understand the necessity for the tremendous sacrifices which the King was prepared to make in order to obtain peace. Without this description it would be impossible to appreciate the miracle wrought by Him who has set bounds to the sea which it cannot pass over ; a miracle by which He saved France from the hands of her enemies when the whole of Europe was leagued together for her ruin ; and not only so, but enabled her to obtain peace with advantages such as in her miserable condition we could never have ventured to dream of.

In the meantime, there was a recoinage of the currency, which was so debased that the intrinsic value of money was reduced to two-thirds of its nominal value. This expedient was profitable to the King, but ruinous to private persons ; the disorders it caused in commerce gave the finishing stroke to its destruction. Samuel Bernard failed for a prodigious amount ; which caused a financial crisis at Lyons, and far beyond it. His bankruptcy was caused by the depreciation of Government bills which he held to the amount of 20,000,000 livres. Desmarets did all he could to keep him on his legs, but it was useless. It was rumoured that he found means to turn his bankruptcy to profit ; but the truth is that to the day of his death, which occurred thirty-five years later, he never managed to restore his credit ; though before his failure it had stood higher throughout Europe than that of any private person before him.

The Pope, driven to despair by the ravages of the Imperial troops in the Ecclesiastical States, was forced at last to yield to the wishes of the Emperor and recognise the Archduke as King of Spain ; whereupon Philip V at once broke off all intercourse with Rome, and thereby deprived the Papal Court of an important source of revenue. The Imperial troops, nevertheless, continued to devastate the States of the Church, and the Marquis de Prié made not the slightest effort to prevent them. He gave a theatrical entertainment and a ball at the Imperial Embassy, in defiance of the Pope, who in this crisis had forbidden all plays and amusements in Rome. The Pope sent to remonstrate with Prié, who merely replied that he had promised

the ladies, and could not go back from his word. The funny thing was that, after this contemptuous answer, the Pope's nephews went to the entertainments, and the Pope was weak enough to allow them to do so. Tessé, seeing no means of averting the coming storm, feigned illness and the necessity for an operation, so as not to be obliged to see people against his will, or to leave his house. The Pope, in despair, had done all he could to prevent the Ambassador of Spain from leaving, and now tried to retain Tessé ; but the latter, seeing that his position was no longer tenable, took his leave, and returned by slow journeys to Paris. Such was the end of that League of Italy, which in its original conception was so wise, but which fell through before it was ever really formed.

In spite of the difference between our ages and positions I was an intimate friend of Marshal Boufflers ; I was therefore delighted to see him loaded with glory and rewards. He knew how much I disliked the multiplication of Dukes and Peers ; and I may venture to say that he felt flattered by my pleasure at seeing him invested with the Peerage. Owing to my conduct in various questions which had arisen in connection with that dignity, he thought I knew something about such matters, and begged me, as a favour, to see that his " letters of erection " were properly drawn up. It was La Vrillière's duty to prepare them ; and, as he was a great friend of mine, we worked at them together, and made them as flattering to the Marshal as we could. As soon as the Marshal returned from Flanders I advised him, in spite of his weak state of health, to make an effort in order to be formally received by the Parliament on the same day as his letters were registered there ; for in this way he would save himself the double fatigue of making the same round of visits twice over ; and, moreover, after his late dangerous illness, it was not wise to postpone either the registration, which alone gave solidity to his new dignity, or his reception, which settled his precedence and that of his posterity for ever. He agreed with me ; and asked me to tell him what he had to do in both ceremonies, and also to be his principal witness on the occasion. I felt very much flattered by this request, and determined not to content myself with the usual custom, which is that the registrar brings one a testimonial ready drawn up for signature ; I wrote one myself, in which I made a public statement of my feelings to-

wards this heroic personage, whose last exploits had covered him with so much glory. I dictated this to the registrar when he called on me, and, after signing it, I sent a copy to Marshal Boufflers, who thanked me warmly. His other witnesses were the Duke d'Aumont, for it is necessary to have two Peers ; M. de Choiseul, the senior Marshal of France at that time ; and Béringhem, the First Equerry ; both the last being Knights of the Order.

The registration of the Marshal's peerage and his reception by Parliament took place on the 19th of March. The whole Parliament was called together, every Peer being in attendance unless unavoidably prevented ; so that the assembly consisted of more than 300 persons, besides an immense crowd of spectators, among them many *seigneurs*, and officers who had served under the Marshal at Lille and elsewhere. M. le Duc took the opportunity to bring his son, the Duke d'Enghien, to Parliament, as is the custom for Princes of the Blood at the reception of Peers. Pelletier, the First-President, said a few words of congratulation to M. le Duc, and very neatly brought in an allusion to the Prince of Conti, who had just died. M. le Duc's reply was delivered in such a low voice that nobody heard a word of it.

The new Peer arrived with a number of his friends ; the streets outside the palace were filled with shouting crowds, who gave him a most triumphal reception. I never saw a finer or more stirring sight, and no man could behave with greater modesty than did the Marshal in the midst of all this pomp. When all were in their places the letters of erection were read, and afterwards the testimonials of the four witnesses, mine being read first. As soon as this reading began I rose and withdrew, as did the Duke d'Aumont and all Peers who were related to the Marshal ; the two Presidents de Lamoignon, father and son, also retired with us, their motive being the petty vanity of wishing to show that they had had a hand in drawing up the letters, for there was no relationship of any sort between them and the Marshal. During the reading we joined our new colleague, who was not very well. As soon as it was over we were called in by an usher ; the Marshal then entered, and, after taking the usual oath, assumed his seat. The President made him a complimentary address, to which the Marshal replied in suitable and modest terms. When the ceremony was over the Marshal turned to the crowd of officers present, es-

pecially to those who had been at Lille, and said very graciously : " Gentlemen, it is to your courage and zeal that I owe all the honours which the King has been pleased to bestow on me. I am fortunate in having been at the head of so many brave men, who knew so thoroughly well how to carry out my plans." He did not give a dinner, as is very often done on these occasions ; the additional fatigue would have been too much for him in his weak state of health. It is remarkable that the day of triumph for the defender of Lille should have been that on which the first flash of lightning presaged the storm about to fall on the man who would not come to his assistance ; it was on the evening of this day that the Count d'Évreux was informed that his services were dispensed with.

The King had a sharp attack of colic on Easter Eve, and could only hear a Low Mass next day. For about a week he saw hardly any one, after which he went about as usual.

The see of Marseilles was vacant, and the King gave it to the Abbé de Belzunce, son of M. de Lausun's sister. He was a saintly priest, the favourite nursling of Father Tellier ; for a long time he had been a member of the Society of Jesus, but the Jesuits had dismissed him, thinking he would be able to serve them better outside. They were quite right ; he was too pious and too stupid, too ignorant and too incapable of learning, to do them any honour or service within their ranks ; as a Bishop he was looked upon with just respect, on account of the purity of his morals and his indefatigable zeal in the work of his diocese. He distinguished himself greatly by his labours when the plague was raging there. His blind submission to the Jesuits, and his astounding ignorance, made him an ardent supporter of the Constitution¹ ; his zeal for it nearly procured him a Cardinal's Hat ; but in the end the Jesuits and the Roman Court came to the conclusion that in such a position they wanted a man who could render greater services than merely repeating out loud what they whispered in his ear, and signing any documents they chose to lay before him. If it were possible for a man of such purity of motive and pious life to dishonour himself he would have done so by his fanatical conduct in this matter of the Constitution, and by the extraordinary publications which he signed and adopted as his own.

¹ The Constitution, or Bull, " Unigenitus," which will be fully explained later on.

No petty *bourgeois* could have shown more delight at a bishopric being conferred on his nephew than did M. de Lausun ; to such a degree was he affected by the merest trifles which gave any sign of returning favour.

M. le Prince, who had not appeared at Court for more than two years, died at Paris on the night of the 31st of March, in his sixty-sixth year. He was a little man, very slender and lean ; with a countenance which was imposing in spite of his small features, there was so much fire and audacity in the eyes. In character he was one of the strangest mixtures which it is possible to conceive. No one ever surpassed him in natural ability ; few have equalled him in acquired knowledge of the most varied kinds ; of the subjects which he took up there were few which he did not study profoundly, even such as manufactures and mechanics. In war he showed a cheerful and natural courage, with a great desire to distinguish himself. When he wished to please no one had more tact or a more polite and gracious manner. He was unrivalled in the art of devising and giving entertainments of all kinds, in which he showed wonderful fancy and ingenuity. On the other hand, there never was a man to whom genius and acquirements were so perfectly useless. His lively and never-failing imagination served only to make him the tormentor of himself and all around him ; he was touchy in the extreme, and it was not safe to have much to do with him ; full of sordid avarice and low cunning, without any sense of justice, he never scrupled to seize what he wanted, if he could do so with impunity. He was incredibly proud ; full of unfounded pretensions ; always ready to encroach on the privileges of others, sometimes by open violence, more often by cunning manœuvres and artfully contrived accidents, which he afterwards converted into precedents to establish his claims. Yet no one was ever more servile. There was no meanness to which he would not stoop to obtain anything he wanted ; hence the base court which he paid to lawyers and financiers, to clerks and valets ; the slavish attentions which he showered on Ministers, and his delicate, yet abject, flattery of the King ; hence also the perpetual changes in his demeanour to other people, by turns haughty and engaging. He was an unnatural son, a cruel father, a detestable master, a pernicious neighbour ; incapable of friendship ; jealous, suspicious, always uneasy, his principal occupation

was to pry into and ferret out secrets, which he did with extraordinary cunning and penetration. His temper was so violent that he would fly into the most furious rages about the merest trifles ; always difficult to please, because he was never in the same mind two days running, he made his household tremble before him. On the whole, it may be said that his avarice and his savage temper were his master-passions, the two tyrants which tortured him perpetually. Yet, with all this, he was a man whom it was very difficult to withstand when he wished to make a favourable impression ; his easy, gracious manner, his delicate and insinuating flattery, and his natural eloquence were quite irresistible. He was, however, absolutely thankless for the greatest services ; unless, indeed, he thought he might obtain more by a show of gratitude.

The pretty trick which he played on Rose with the foxes shows what he could do to a neighbour if he coveted his land. By methods such as this he extended his property at Chantilly enormously, at the expense of people who had not Rose's courage, nor the advantage of his familiarity with the King. By dint of flattery and attentions he contrived to extract, for nothing, the *capitainerie* of Senlis and the forest of Hallustre near Chantilly, from my uncle, the Marquis de Saint-Simon, and his wife, who were both very old at the time.

Such privileges of the *entrées* as he enjoyed, which were not the most extended, only came to him by the marriage of his son with the King's bastard daughter ; and while his son and daughter¹ were, as the King's son-in-law and daughter-in-law, admitted with the rest of the Royal Family to the King's private room, in the interval between the supper and the *coucher*, M. le Prince was usually to be seen asleep on a *tabouret* outside the door. I have seen him there many a time waiting with the rest of the courtiers for the King to come out to be undressed.

The Duchess of Maine² kept him at arm's length ; he paid court to the Duke of Maine, who despised him, and treated him with scant respect. Madame la Duchesse drove him to despair ; he was torn in two opposite directions by the feelings of a father and those of a courtier ; but the courtier nearly always got the upper hand. His married daughter had quietly thrown off his yoke, which pressed

¹ M. le Duc and Madame du Maine.

² His daughter.

heavily on her unmarried sisters ; its burden killed Mademoiselle de Condé, a person of merit and ability, who was highly spoken of. Mademoiselle d'Enghien, who was repulsively ugly, and had none of her sister's merit, had for some time been trying to get Vendôme to marry her for want of a better husband, though her health would run considerable risks with him. M. and Madame du Maine did their best to bring it about, out of compassion for her, and also in the general interests of bastardy. M. le Prince was indignant at the idea. He felt the degradation of the double marriage of his children with the King's bastards, but he had derived some solid advantage from that : whereas an alliance with Vendôme promised nothing but unpleasantness. He dared not oppose it, however, if the King, urged on by M. du Maine, should speak to him in its favour ; he therefore took refuge in flight, and absented himself from Court on the plea of ill-health, long before he was really taken ill.

The Prince of Conti, who treated him with much more respect than M. le Duc, was the only person who really got on with him ; but even he was not always successful. As for M. le Duc, he and his father were mutually afraid of each other ; the son feared the father, who was full of whims and ill-temper ; the father stood in awe of him as the King's son-in-law. Very often, however, M. le Prince forgot his prudence, and gave vent to furious outbursts against his son.

Madame la Princesse was his perpetual victim. She was as virtuous as she was ugly and silly ; she was slightly humpbacked, and had a peculiar smell by which she could be tracked at a considerable distance. Nevertheless, M. le Prince was insanely jealous of her to the last. All her indefatigable attentions for him, all her piety and gentle submission, could not protect her from his insults, which were continual ; nor from his blows and kicks, which were by no means rare. She was allowed no authority even in the most trifling matters, and never ventured to ask for any. When it was his whim to go from one place to another he made her start at a moment's notice ; and very often, when the carriage had gone so far as the end of the street, he would make her get out, or turn back, to start again that afternoon or next morning. On one occasion, when he was thinking of going to Fontainebleau, this went on every day for a fortnight. At other times he would send for her

when she was in church, sometimes when she was just about to receive the Holy Communion, and she had to go instantly. It was not that he wanted her in the least ; or that she ventured even to go to church without first asking leave ; but his caprices were endless.

He himself never knew what he was going to do. Every day there were four dinners ready for him ; one at Paris, one at Ecouen, one at Chantilly, and one wherever the Court happened to be at the time. It is true they were not very expensive ; they consisted of soup and half a roast chicken, the other half of which served for next day. He always kept himself shut up, and even at Court was seldom visible except at the hours for seeing the King or the Ministers ; if he had occasion to see the latter he used to drive them wild by his frequent and prolonged visits. He hardly ever asked any one to dinner ; or to Chantilly, where he only saw the members of his household and a few learned Jesuits ; but if he did invite any one there he was a charming host. No one could do the honours better in his own house ; the most humble private person could not have taken more trouble ; and he never betrayed that receiving guests was any constraint on him, all his attentions were bestowed with such easy and natural politeness. But it was a constraint ; and for that reason he seldom invited any one.

He had formerly been in love with more than one lady about the Court ; at such times no expenditure was too great for him. He was the personification of graceful and magnificent gallantry, a Jupiter transformed into a shower of gold. Sometimes he would disguise himself as a footman ; sometimes in female attire, as a hawker of trinkets and perfumery ; his ingenuity was never at a loss. Once he took great pains to get the King to ask him to give an entertainment in his honour, with the sole object of delaying the departure for Italy of a great lady about the Court, with whom he was in love. He hired the whole of one side of a street near St. Sulpice ; and made communications between the houses from end to end, to conceal his places of assignation. He was frantically jealous of his mistresses. Among them was the Marquise de Richelieu ; I mention her name because she was so notorious that it is not worth while to make a mystery about it. He was desperately in love with her, and spent millions, partly in presents to her, partly in obtaining information about her conduct. He found out

that her favours were shared by the Count de Roucy (it was to her that this ingenious Count gave the advice, in all good faith, to have straw laid in the street to deaden the sound of the church-bells which annoyed her). M. le Prince reproached her with her infidelity, and, when she attempted to deny it, produced such proofs that she was forced to confess. In her alarm at the prospect of losing so rich and lavish a lover, she hit upon a plan which she thought would set his mind at ease. She proposed to M. le Prince that she should give the Count de Roucy an assignation, and that he should have some of his people ready in ambush to kill him. This humane and ingenious design had not the success she expected. M. le Prince was so horrified that he communicated it to the Count de Roucy, and never saw the lady again in his life.

It is remarkable that, with all his ability, courage, and anxiety to distinguish himself, his father never could make him understand the first principles of the art of war. He took the greatest pains with him, taking him with him when at the head of an army, explaining his reasons for every movement, and sometimes entrusting him with commands, remaining near at hand to give advice if necessary. It was all of no avail ; in spite of all his son's undeniable talents the great Condé had to give up the hope of making him a famous General like himself. For the rest, he knew his son's character well enough, but prudently kept his knowledge to himself ; and the son was always rather overawed by his father's glory.

During the last fifteen or twenty years of his life it was rumoured that something more than hot temper was the cause of M. le Prince's outbursts of fury ; he was suspected of being out of his mind at times ; he sometimes showed signs of derangement beyond the limits of his domestic circle. The Maréchale de Noailles told me that he came into her room one morning, just as the maids were making her bed and had only the counterpane to put on. He stopped for an instant in the doorway ; then, exclaiming, " Oh ! what a delightful bed, what a delightful bed ! " he took a run and sprang into it. He rolled himself about among the bed-clothes several times ; then got out, and apologised to the Maréchale, saying that her bed looked so neat that he really could not resist it. There had never been anything between them ; the Maréchale's reputation had always been beyond

reproach, and she was now old ; so that there could be no suspicion of anything wrong. The Maréchale and her servants were stupefied with astonishment ; she got out of it cleverly by bursting out laughing, and treating the affair as a joke. It was rumoured that there were times when he fancied that he was a dog or some other animal ; and trustworthy persons have assured me that they have seen him, while the King was kneeling at his *prie-Dieu* during his *coucher*, suddenly throw his head up several times like a dog barking, and open his mouth, but without uttering any sound. It is certain that there were periods when nobody saw him, not even his most familiar servants, except one old valet who had acquired authority over him, and, it was said, used it pretty roughly.

For some years before his death he insisted on having everything which entered or left his body weighed, and kept a careful record. This led to endless discussions which were the despair of his doctors. He suffered at intervals from fever and gout, and aggravated these complaints by his uneasy temper and fits of fury. Finot, who was our medical attendant, was his doctor, and did not know what to do with him. He has often told me that his greatest difficulty was that M. le Prince believed himself to be dead, and would not take any food ; because, he said, dead people were not in the habit of doing so. It was impossible to make him believe that he was alive, yet, if he persisted in not eating, he would die in reality. At last Finot and another doctor agreed that he was dead, but assured him that cases had been known of dead people who ate. They undertook to prove it, and produced some persons whom they could trust, assuring him that they were dead and yet took food. This overcame his obstinacy, and he consented to eat ; but only in the company of Finot and the other dead people, in whose society he showed a very good appetite. This whim lasted for some time, and drove Finot to despair ; but he used to come in fits of laughter to tell us of the conversations about the other world which went on at these repasts. This was some time before M. le Prince's death.

When he became really ill Madame la Princesse implored him to think of his soul and see a priest ; but for a long time he amused himself by putting her off. He had, however, been seeing Father de la Tour very secretly for some months past ; the Father told me so himself, and how

surprised and delighted Madame la Princesse was when she found it out. After this there were no more mysteries, and Father de la Tour attended M. le Prince openly during the few remaining weeks of his life. The Jesuits were completely taken in; they had made sure of a Prince who had been brought up by them, had sent his only son to their college, and lived with them in the closest familiarity at Chantilly. Their Father Lucas, a harsh, vulgar man, was his official confessor; and though M. le Prince did not trouble him much, he never omitted to send a post-chaise to Rouen for him every year at Easter-tide. This Father heard that he was dying, and went all the way to Paris to see him; but M. le Prince would neither admit him nor pay his travelling expenses. It was a terrible affront for the Jesuits. M. le Prince seems to have been of the same opinion as the First-President Harlay, who told the Jesuit Fathers that they were good to live with, but that it was better to die with the Fathers of the Oratory.

On the night of Easter Sunday M. le Prince became so much worse that the Last Sacraments were administered. After this he had a long conversation with M. le Duc, who was in tears, giving him minute instructions about his funeral; he mentioned some ceremonies which had been forgotten when his father was buried, but were on no account to be omitted on this occasion. He did not fear death, he said, because he had always put in practice a maxim of his father's, namely, that a man would never be frightened in moments of danger if he accustomed himself to thinking about them beforehand. He went on to talk of the beauties of Chantilly, of the buildings which he had left unfinished, and of a large sum of money which he had amassed for that purpose; and continued in this strain till his mind became confused. It was a striking proof of his firmness of mind, but a sad way of employing his last moments.

I will conclude this sketch by a story of Verrillon, who lived with him, as he had lived with his father, on a footing of great esteem and familiarity. M. le Prince wished him to buy a house close to Chantilly, but Verrillon declined. "So long as I enjoy the honour of your good graces," he said, "I cannot be too near you, and I prefer my little room here; if I should unfortunately lose them, I should like to be as far away from you as possible. In either case, a house in this neighbourhood would be useless to me."

I must not omit to record the vengeance of the Jesuits, the first sample of Father Tellier's methods. As we have seen, they had had the mortification of seeing Mademoiselle de Condé, the Prince of Conti, and M. le Prince slip through their fingers in rapid succession. They dared not attack the Princes and Princesses of the Blood; yet they felt that, to strike a proper amount of awe into private families, it was necessary to make an example of somebody; so they fell on Mademoiselle de Tours. She was a lady of good family in Auvergne, a person of piety, ability, and merit. She had formerly lived with Madame de Montgon, being related to her husband, and was well known to many ladies about the Court. When Madame de Montgon died everybody pitied her, and the Princess of Conti (M. le Prince's daughter) took her to live with her. Her virtue made her an object of suspicion to the Jesuits; and, moreover, they always distrusted the Hôtel de Conti on account of the flavour of opinions held there in old days which still clung to it, and extended even to the household of the other Princess of Conti, the King's daughter. So they accused Mademoiselle de Tours of having been the means of introducing Father de la Tour to the Prince of Conti, and subsequently to M. le Prince. The Princess of Conti took her part warmly, but it was of no avail; she received positive orders to turn Mademoiselle de Tours out of her house. Besides that the poor girl lost all she had by her dismissal, she had nowhere to go to; for there was not a convent in Paris which dared receive her, nor any private friend who could venture to take her into her house. After some days the Jesuits became impatient at seeing her still at the Hôtel de Conti, and alarmed at the fuss which was made about the affair; so they obtained an order for her to go into any convent she might select. They never took the trouble to invent any pretext to justify their treatment of her; they wished it to be known that she was punished solely for the imputed crime of having introduced Father de la Tour to the Princes.

I mentioned, on the occasion of the death of Madame d'Armagnac, that the Princes of the Blood were trying to put themselves on a level with the Sons and Grandsons of France with respect to the wearing of mourning-cloaks by persons who came to visit them on the death of their near relations. When the Prince of Conti died M. le Duc

claimed a right to that mark of respect ; but not a single Duke or foreign Prince would wear the long cloak when visiting the family ; and the King, knowing that the claim was an innovation, would not order them to do so. M. le Duc, therefore, got out of the difficulty by announcing that the new Prince of Conti was unwell, and the Princess of Conti and her daughters in too great affliction to receive any visits at all ; but a fresh opportunity having presented itself only six weeks later by the death of M. le Prince, M. le Duc was determined that his claim should be enforced without any more subterfuges. On the 4th of April he arrived at Versailles, and announced that the Princes of the Blood would receive visits of condolence next day, but only from persons wearing long mourning-cloaks. The consequence was that the Prince of Conti, M. du Maine, and he stayed in their rooms all next day, and not a single visitor presented himself. M. le Duc had gone too far to draw back ; he got M. du Maine, who was equally interested with himself, to speak to the King about it. Next day an order was sent to the Dukes through M. de Beauvilliers, and to the foreign Princes through the Grand Equerry, to comply with M. le Duc's wishes. The Sons of France and the Duke of Orleans, who thus lost a mark of distinction between themselves and the Princes of the Blood, dared not say a word for fear of the bastards ; so Dukes and foreign Princes, of course, had to submit in silence.

Accordingly, on Saturday, the 6th, everybody paid the prescribed visits ; but both men and ladies did so in a manner so indecent as to be almost insulting. The men wore lace cravats instead of simple bands, with white or red stockings, very few even wore brown ones ; they wore tie-wigs, powdered, and white gloves ; the ladies showed lace collars under their mantles, with coloured ribbons in their hair, and wore gloves embroidered in colours. It was really like a masquerade. The manner in which people arrived and took their leave was just as ridiculous ; there were piles of mourning-cloaks ready at the door which the men huddled on hastily anyhow ; people merely went in and made their bows without saying a word, looked at each other laughing, and went away again ; Dukes and Princes were reconducted as far as the Gallery by the Princes of the Blood, and their wives as far as the ante-chamber by the Princesses, but in perfect silence ; and in many cases people

threw off their cloaks before their hosts were out of sight. The Princes of the Blood were highly offended, but thought it better to be satisfied with their victory and say nothing.

I was not there myself ; I happened to be at La Ferté when M. le Prince died, and, as I felt sure there would be pretensions set up which would cause a good deal of ill-feeling, I thought it better to stay away ; not only till everything was over, but till people had ceased talking about it, so as to avoid being mixed up in anything that might occur. This precaution did not save me, however ; when I returned to Court I heard that M. le Duc, when speaking to the King about the affair of the mourning-cloaks, had been good enough to tell him that it was a pity I was absent, as I should have had a good deal to say about it ; to which, as I was informed, the King made no reply. When Madame la Duchesse gave birth shortly afterwards to the Count de Clermont, I visited neither her nor M. le Duc, nor did Madame de Saint-Simon ; I gave out openly that I would never see him again in my life, and I kept my word.

M. le Prince was the last of his branch to bear that name ; the King ordained that M. le Duc should continue to be so called, and not assume the title borne by his father. It may, perhaps, not be out of place here to give some account of the origin of these singular titles, M. le Prince, M. le Duc, M. le Comte, and those of Monseigneur, Monsieur, and Mademoiselle.

When the intrigues of the House of Lorraine against the Royal Family caused the Huguenots to take up arms, the Prince of Condé, brother of the King of Navarre, and uncle to Henri IV, put himself at their head. He was the only member of the Royal Family in their ranks, and they were accustomed, when speaking to him, to call him simply M. le Prince ; he was their own Prince, and his accession to their party conferred on it a certain distinction and no little strength. This way of speaking of him became an established custom, so much so that, when he was killed at Jarnac, in 1569, it passed on to his son, although he was not the chief of the party. The Prince of Navarre, afterwards Henri IV, was recognised as their nominal leader ; though, on account of his youth, the Admiral de Coligny was so in reality. But he was always called the Prince of Navarre in full, while his cousin, the Prince of Condé, of the same age as himself and of a junior branch, was known as M. le Prince. This second Prince of Condé died in 1588, leaving

a posthumous son. When Henri IV succeeded to the throne he had no children, and this young Prince of Condé was consequently his heir-presumptive, The King sent for him and took great care of his education ; the custom still prevailed of calling him simply M. le Prince, and it passed on to his son, the great Condé, and to his grandson, whose death I have just recorded. The Count de Soissons was his paternal uncle ; he was annoyed that his nephew should have such a distinction, and thought he would claim one similar ; he therefore got his friends and dependents to speak to him simply as M. le Comte. The French are always ready to give in to pretensions of this sort, and to follow the fashion ; soon the Count de Soissons was universally called M. le Comte only ; and, as the King raised no objection, the name passed after him to his son, the last of his branch. M. le Prince was not on good terms with the Count de Soissons, but he had no reason to oppose a claim which conferred additional distinction on a younger branch of his family ; it occurred to him, however, that he might obtain another for his own branch. He therefore set the fashion of calling his eldest son, the Duke of Enghien, simply M. le Duc ; and succeeded so well that it became a sort of hereditary distinction for the eldest son in the House of Condé ; so that there were four M. le Princes and four M. le Ducs in succession. The King put a stop to the title of M. le Prince, because he looked upon it as the title of the first Prince of the Blood ; and that distinction had now passed from the House of Condé to the Duke of Orleans.

Gaston, brother to Louis XIII, was the first Son of France who was regularly called "Monsieur," although the name is occasionally given to the two brothers of Charles IX successively, in the memoirs of those times. My father has told me that he never heard him called by any other name ; and he retained it all his life, although the Duke of Anjou, brother to Louis XIV, was alive at the same time. When he died in 1660 the Duke of Anjou was called Monsieur in his turn. The Duke of Berry never took that name, because, though he was brother to the King of Spain, his eldest brother never became King of France. As regards the name of "Madame," there can be only one lady entitled to it through her husband, because there can be only one "Monsieur" at a time ; it is true that there were two Mesdames while Gaston's widow survived, but she was only

a dowager. The Daughters of France are in a different position ; they are called Madame, out of respect for their rank, with the addition of their baptismal names ; for, as they have no apanages like their brothers, those are the only names they have.

The singular title of "Mademoiselle" is of quite recent origin. The only daughter of Gaston, as she was for eighteen years, was always called Mademoiselle in Monsieur's household. She played an active part in early life ; and her memoirs show us very plainly what a contempt she had for Madame, her stepmother, and how superior she considered herself, rightly or wrongly, to her half-sisters. She wished for something to distinguish her from them, and got people to call her simply "Mademoiselle." She kept that name all her life ; even after Monsieur, brother to Louis XIV, had grown-up daughters. He did not like it, though he always kept on good terms with her, in hopes of obtaining her inheritance, and tried hard to get his eldest daughter called Mademoiselle. Although people did so after a time, they always called the other the *Grande Mademoiselle*, to distinguish her ; for she was a very tall person.

Until the reign of Louis XIV no Dauphin was ever called Monseigneur by itself, in speaking of him, or even in addressing him. In writing to him he was addressed as Monseigneur le Dauphin ; but he was always spoken of as *Monsieur* le Dauphin, and addressed as "Monsieur" in speaking to him. No Son of France was addressed as "Monseigneur," and, *a fortiori*, no one of lower rank. The King began to call him Monseigneur in joke ; though I daresay it was partly with the intention of accustoming people to a name which would distinguish him from Monsieur. However that may be, the King continued to call him Monseigneur, and by degrees everybody followed his example. Only M. de Montausier, the Bishop of Meaux, and one or two others who had been concerned in his education, held out against it ; they yielded so far as to address him as Monseigneur when speaking to him, but when speaking of him they always called him *Monsieur* le Dauphin. M. de Montausier, who had been his governor, would not even go so far as that ; he always addressed him as Monsieur, and used to ask, in joke, whether the Dauphin had been made a Bishop. This was because, a short time before, in an assembly of the clergy, the Bishops, in order to make other

people call them Monseigneur, had agreed among themselves always to address each other in that way. No one took the hint except the clergy, and laymen of the lower classes ; everybody else laughed at them. They held their ground all the same, and no joint episcopal resolution was ever carried out with such fidelity.

The title of Dauphin, therefore, remained in abeyance for a time, and Monseigneur was called simply by that name so long as he lived. He was the first, and up to the present day the last, person who was called simply Monseigneur. Long after it had become the custom to call him so M. le Duc and the Prince of Conti, either by chance or by design, began to be addressed as "Monseigneur," when serving with the army, by members of their staffs. By degrees the custom spread, and officers thought they would be guilty of disrespect if they did not adopt it. People laughed at first ; but the force of example and the fear of giving offence prevailed, and soon these Princes were always called "Monseigneur" in speaking of them, not only in the army, but when they returned to Court. Of course, the Duke of Orleans, being of higher rank, was addressed as Monseigneur too ; the custom was also extended to M. du Maine and the Count de Toulouse. One could see by their manner that they did not like being addressed as Monsieur ; and soon people of all ranks and ages, with very few exceptions, got into the way of giving them the "Monseigneur." When the Duke of Orleans had become Regent, everybody without exception called him "Monseigneur" ; but I derived this advantage from my long and intimate friendship with him that I never called him so in my life, either in public or in private. At the Council of Regency, in giving one's opinion, one addressed oneself to him ; and I was the only member who called him "Monsieur." Marshal Villars, Marshal Villeroy, and other persons of like distinction, reproved me for it, more than once, telling me that he would be angry with me some day. But I kept to my own way, and he never showed the slightest sign of being offended. Of course, as I called the Duke of Orleans "Monsieur," the other Princes could not take offence at being addressed in the same way ; and up to the present I have kept my virginity in this matter. I never addressed any one as "Monseigneur" except the two Sons of France, for whom it became the custom very soon after the Duke of Burgundy's marriage.

CHAPTER XIII

1709

Gradual downfall of Vendôme—He is excluded from Marly—And from Meudon—The cabal confounded—Their servility to the Duchess of Burgundy—Vendôme wishes to go to Spain—The King's refusal—Retirement of M. de la Rochefoucauld—His history and character—Torcy sent on a secret mission to Holland—Malicious joke of Lausun—Marriage in the Lorraine family—Handsome behaviour of the Grand Equerry—Death of Saumery—Of the Prince of Carignan—A deaf-mute taught to speak and read—Death of the Duke de la Trémouille—Harcourt to command in Germany—He lays himself out to please the Duke and Duchess of Burgundy—Rumours of Chamillart's approaching dismissal—Harcourt's sarcastic suggestion—Riots at Paris—The King's statues insulted—Placards and threatening letters—The Duchess de Grammont originates an unfortunate suggestion—Forced sacrifice of private plate—I bring up the rear.

THE downfall of Vendôme had three successive stages. The first was the notification to him that he would not be entrusted again with the command of an army in the field, which I mentioned in its proper place. We have now arrived at the second ; between it and the third there was an interval of two or three months, but as the last one had no connection with any other event I shall relate them both together. As I have already mentioned, Vendôme had retired to Anet, where the grass was beginning to grow in the courtyard, and had asked the King, as a favour, to be allowed to pay his Court only at Marly and Meudon ; to both of which places he contrived to receive invitations. This slight continuance of favour kept up his spirits a little in his solitude ; it showed that his services were still appreciated by the King and Monseigneur, in spite of all the efforts of his enemies. So his cabal gave out, at least ; and he was willing that people should think so, assuming in the meanwhile an air of philosophy and contempt for the world which deceived nobody. At Marly and Meudon, when the first embarrassment was over, he resumed his haughty airs and loud voice, and domineered over the

conversation. Though but few people gathered round him, a stranger coming in would have taken him for the master of the saloon ; certainly his freedom with Monseigneur, and, so far as he dared, with the King, would have made any one think he was the principal personage there. The Duke of Burgundy's piety made him put up with Vendôme's presence and airs, as if there had been no unpleasantness between them. But the Duchess of Burgundy was not so tolerant ; they were intensely disagreeable to her. For the present she said nothing, but she was on the watch for an opportunity.

One presented itself during the King's first visit to Marly after Easter. Brelan was the game in fashion at this time, and Monseigneur often sat down rather early in the afternoon to play with the Duchess of Burgundy. One day they wanted a fifth player to make up their set ; Monseigneur saw Vendôme at the far end of the saloon, and sent to ask him to come. The Duchess at once said, quietly but intelligibly, that it was disagreeable enough for her to put up with M. de Vendôme's presence at Marly, without having him to play at the same table with her ; and she begged Monseigneur to excuse her. Monseigneur, who had sent for Vendôme without reflection, could not take offence at this. He looked round the saloon and invited some one else. In the meantime Vendôme came up to the table, and had to submit to the affront of being sent away again, in full view of everybody. The feelings of this haughty, overbearing man may be imagined ; he turned on his heel, and went off to his own room, to vent his anger in solitude.

In the meantime the young Princess, while going on with her game, was reflecting on what had just occurred. Emboldened by her success, yet uneasy as to what the King might think about it, she determined to push her point, and obtain a complete victory if possible, or at any rate relieve herself from an awkward situation ; for, notwithstanding her familiarity with the King, she was easily embarrassed, being naturally gentle and timid. As soon as the game was over she ran to Madame de Maintenon's room before the King could arrive there, and told her what had happened. She said that, after what had occurred in Flanders, it was extremely painful to her to meet M. de Vendôme ; his conduct in ostentatiously avoiding Versailles, where she could keep out of his way, and continually asking

for invitations to Marly, where she could not help seeing him, was deliberately insulting to her ; and she could bear it no longer. She added that, since he had been relieved of his command on account of his blunders, there could be no reason for asking him to Marly except the King's personal affection for him ; and it was painful to her to find that the King seemed to consider the balance equal between M. de Vendôme on the one side, and his grandson and herself on the other. All this was said with much vivacity, but very briefly, because the King was just coming.

Madame de Maintenon spoke to the King about this affair that very evening. She praised the Princess's gentleness and moderation in having kept silence so long, and showed how reasonable and natural her feelings were. Her success was complete and immediate. The King had quite lost his inclination for Vendôme ; moreover, he did not like having discontented people about him, and he could not doubt that Vendôme was so since his dismissal from his command ; he was glad of the opportunity to get rid of him, and at the same time to give pleasure to his granddaughter and Madame de Maintenon ; before he went to bed he ordered Bloin to go to M. de Vendôme next morning and tell him to abstain from asking for invitations to Marly in the future ; because his presence there, where the Duchess of Burgundy could not help meeting him, was disagreeable to her.

The fury and despair of Vendôme on receiving this unexpected message were beyond belief. He restrained himself, however, lest worse things should happen ; he did not venture to ask for an audience of the King, but went away to hide his rage and shame at Crosat's house at Clichy. The card-table adventure had been talked about a good deal in Paris as well as at Court ; and when it became known that Vendôme had suddenly gone to Clichy the report got about that he had been told to leave Marly. He heard of it, and, to show that it was untrue, he returned thither two days before the King was to leave. These two days he spent in shame and embarrassment, and then went off to Anet. He never set foot at Marly again.

After his first transports of anger were over he made the best of what still remained to him. Bloin had said nothing about Meudon ; he made sure that he would be always welcome there, and went about boasting of Monseigneur's

kindness to him, just like any provincial. Two days before Monseigneur was to go to Meudon, Vendôme always made a point henceforth of going to Versailles, to pay his respects to the King, and then stayed with Monseigneur all the time he was at Meudon—he, who in the days of his prosperity had hardly condescended to spend more than a day or two there. The Duchess of Burgundy always went over to Meudon to see Monseigneur when he was there; and Vendôme used to appear audaciously in her presence, as if to show her that in Monseigneur's house at least he still had the upper hand. Remembering her experience at Marly, the Princess bore this insolence quietly; but bided her time.

Two months later it happened that the King and Madame de Maintenon went to Meudon with the Duchess of Burgundy to dine there. M. de Vendôme had so little sense as to present himself among the first when they got out of their carriage. The Duchess of Burgundy, who was much offended, made him the slightest possible bow, and turned away her head in a very marked manner. Vendôme felt the snub, nevertheless he had the insolence to follow her in the afternoon to the table where she was playing cards, and received an unmistakable cut. At this he began to feel uncomfortable; he went off angrily to his room, and did not reappear till very late. In the meanwhile, the Duchess of Burgundy found an opportunity to point out to Monseigneur how disrespectfully Vendôme was treating her. She complained bitterly to the King and Madame de Maintenon of his conduct when they returned to Versailles that evening, saying how hard it was that Monseigneur should treat her less kindly than the King himself; and that he should allow M. de Vendôme to make use of Meudon as a refuge and a consolation for losing Marly.

Next morning Vendôme complained to Monseigneur of the strange persecution which he said he suffered everywhere at the hands of the Duchess of Burgundy; but she had been beforehand with him, and Monseigneur answered him so coldly that he retired with tears in his eyes; resolved, nevertheless, to get some sort of satisfaction out of Monseigneur. He consulted Madame de Montbazon and the Princess of Conti, and the latter spoke that same day to Monseigneur on behalf of Vendôme. She met with no success; Monseigneur merely said that Vendôme must keep

out of the way of the Duchess of Burgundy when she came to Meudon ; it was the least he could do, he added, consistently with common respect, until he had made his peace with her. Vendôme was cruelly mortified by this dry and uncompromising answer ; but his punishment was not yet complete. The next afternoon he was playing at *papillon* in one of the private rooms, when d'Antin arrived from Versailles, and, going up to the table, asked rather pointedly whether the game was nearly over. This attracted Vendôme's attention, he asked d'Antin why he was in such a hurry. D'Antin replied that he had to give him an account of the commission he had done for him. "What commission ?" said Vendôme in astonishment ; "I never gave you any commission." "I beg your pardon," said d'Antin, "do not you remember that I had an answer to bring you ?" Then Vendôme understood that d'Antin wanted to speak to him ; so he got up, and went into a little dressing-room where they could be private. There d'Antin told him that he was commanded by the King to ask Monseigneur, as a favour, not to take him to Meudon in future, because his presence there was disagreeable to the Duchess of Burgundy ; the King also wished that Vendôme should know this, and not apply for any more invitations. On hearing this Vendôme gave vent to language which showed that he was beside himself with rage. That evening he spoke to Monseigneur ; who, without moving a muscle of his countenance, told him coldly that he had better not come to Meudon any more.

The short remainder of his visit was spent by Vendôme in confusion and anger, and on the day when Monseigneur returned to Versailles he took refuge at Anet. After a long period of prosperity, after having been the idol before whom the whole court and army abased themselves, after being adored in spite of his vices, and seeing his very blunders and failings held up to admiration, he now found himself shunned and solitary ; and he showed that he was incapable of bearing ill-fortune. He had conceived the monstrous design of ruining the heir-apparent to the Crown, from whom he had received nothing but kindness, with no other object than that of his own personal aggrandisement. For some months he had openly triumphed over him, with the most scandalous and indecent exultation. Now we had the satisfaction of seeing this huge colossus dashed to the ground by the breath

of a wise and courageous young Princess, and she received the applause which she so richly deserved. All her friends were delighted to see what great things she was capable of ; all who were opposed to her and her husband trembled. That formidable cabal, so powerful, so influential, so closely united by a common object, was reduced to the utmost extremity of depression and terror. It was delightful to see its audacious leaders, male and female, trying every method which cunning and meanness could suggest to obtain forgiveness ; to see them making up to persons in the opposite party, whom in their arrogance they had done their best to expose to hatred and ridicule ; delightful, above all, to see them cringing and creeping before the young Princess ; paying servile court to the Duke of Burgundy, and to any one who they thought could influence him.

M. de Vendôme had no resources in himself, except such as he found in his vices, and in the company of his valets. He still boasted of the favour of Monseigneur ; who, he said, had been forced against his will to act as he had done ; he hoped to persuade the world that there was still a future for him, and in this way preserve some shreds of his former importance ; but he found his present condition intolerable ; to escape from it he wrote to the Princess des Ursins, and suggested that he could be useful in Spain. The Spanish Government was in great straits, and asked that he might be sent there as a General. His disgrace was, however, of too recent date ; the King was displeased at his looking to Spain for support, and refused flatly. We shall see, however, that this intrigue was renewed not very long afterwards.

No one gained more by Vendôme's downfall than Madame de Maintenon ; after such a proof of her power, her influence became the terror of the Court, for no one doubted that the thunderbolt came from her hand. Before long we shall see her launch another, no less terrifying.

About the same time she was finally delivered from the presence of a favourite who was doubly odious to her, because he had always refused to bend the knee to her ; and because she knew the King's heart too well to hope that she could ever destroy his influence. When I say " finally delivered " I mean that his favour was already on the wane, before age and blindness forced him to retire from the Court. I speak of M. de la Rochefoucauld, whom I have often had occasion to mention. There was nothing in his character to recall

the memory of his father, who made so much noise in the world by his wit, gallantry, and intrigues, and by the part which he played during the troubles of Louis XIV's minority. When these troubles were over, and the newly married King, surrounded by a brilliant and lively Court, was spending most of his time at the house of the Countess de Soissons, the Prince de Marsillac, as M. de la Rochefoucauld was then called, made his appearance in society. His rather common-looking face gave no promise of ability, in which it was not deceptive; he held no office or function, he still bore the scars of wounds received in the combat of the Faubourg St. Antoine; and he was the son of a man whom the King had never forgiven, who never came near the Court, but was the delight of a most brilliant and exclusive circle in Paris. No one, therefore, thought he had anything to fear from the rivalry of this new-comer. How it came about I do not know, and I have heard from M. de Lausun, and old men who remembered those times, that it was equally inexplicable to everybody; but in a very few days the King took such a fancy to him that Vardes, the Count de Guiche, and other favourites became seriously uneasy. This liking went on continually increasing; he was given the offices of Grand Master of the Wardrobe and Master of the Hounds in rapid succession; on the latter occasion the King wrote to him with his own hand to say that, as his friend, he rejoiced to have the opportunity, as his master, of giving him this appointment. He was the King's confidant in his transitory love-affairs, and was accused of having procured Mademoiselle de Fontanges for him. The early death of this mistress, not without suspicions of poison, made no difference to her friend's fortunes. He afterwards became very intimate with Madame de Montespan, Madame de Thianges, and all that family. This alliance was the cause of Madame de Maintenon's dislike for him, but it lasted as long as they lived. His favour also proved durable; so much so that he was rightly known as the King's friend, for his hold on the King's affection was quite independent of any external assistance, and not to be shaken by any attacks or intrigues. The King paid his debts three times, and often quietly gave him very large sums of money.

M. de la Rochefoucauld was very proud, very brave, and as honourable as a man can be who has an honest heart, but who has become thoroughly saturated with the spirit of

a Court. He was noble and magnificent in everything, though he despised ostentation as beneath his dignity ; naturally obliging, he would incur considerable risk to overcome the King's prejudices against any friend of his ; very frequently he would do so on behalf of persons quite unknown to him, whose merit and undeserved misfortunes had aroused his sympathy ; and he often succeeded in setting them on their legs again.

I do not know the cause of the enmity between him and M. de Louvois, unless it arose out of his friendship with Madame de Montespan, who was always at daggers drawn with that Minister. The successes of the war had carried Louvois to the summit of power and favour ; but in 1679 the war was over, and he began to be afraid of a haughty and hot-tempered favourite who feared nothing, could speak his mind to the King with the utmost freedom, and never concealed his opinions from the world. He therefore conceived the project of giving his daughter in marriage to his son, with a magnificent dowry and other advantages which he thought could not fail to win him over to his side. But it takes two to make a bargain of that sort, and M. de la Rochefoucauld would not hear of it till the King, worried by the mutual dislike of two men whom he saw so continually, forced, rather than persuaded him to give his consent. M. de la Rochefoucauld never liked his daughter-in-law, and would not have her about the Court ; though she was universally respected for her merit and virtue, and though by economy and good management she contrived not only to restore the fallen fortunes of his family, which had been considerably damaged by M. de la Rochefoucauld himself, but to leave it one of the richest and most powerful in the kingdom.

M. de la Rochefoucauld was not only a dull man, he was also incredibly ignorant. He was proud, harsh, and rough in his manners, and so shy that, though he had spent all his life at Court, he was never at his ease with persons of his own class, except those whom he saw every day. As the head of the Rochefoucaulds, he was of course surly, for they are all so, and consequently very disagreeable ; I have seen very few of that family who were free from this unpleasant failing, and M. de la Rochefoucauld was surlier than any of them. Nevertheless, he was more often a friend than an enemy (though he could be a very dangerous enemy) ;

but except in a very few instances his friendship arose merely from caprice and not from any real regard or esteem. He cared very little for his children ; though they were always extremely dutiful to him, he made their life very hard. He was always governed by his servants, who nearly all became rich, for he squandered his money on them to such a degree that in his last days his son had to interfere by force to prevent him from ruining himself. There were old people who remembered seeing Bachelier waiting at his table in livery, and used to express their astonishment at seeing him first *valet-de-chambre*, having purchased Bloin's office. It must be said, in praise of Bachelier, that he was very modest and respectful, never forgot himself, and always behaved to M. de la Rochefoucauld and members of his family as if he had never risen from his former position. He was, moreover, an honest, sensible man, and generally respected. He refused many gifts from M. de la Rochefoucauld, and often procured favours for his children which they would never have obtained for themselves. His son is also well spoken of.

Although M. de la Rochefoucauld enjoyed the King's most marked favour throughout his life, it must have cost him dear if he retained the slightest shred of independent feeling. No man ever served another more assiduously, more meanly, or, it must be said, more slavishly. I cannot believe that in the future any one will ever be found willing to put up with such a life for more than forty years. He never missed a *lever*, or a *coucher* ; he was always present when the King changed his clothes, which he did twice every day ; he always accompanied him out hunting, or when he went for a walk ; he was obliged to ask leave—not to sleep out, for he did not sleep at Paris twenty times during his forty years—but to dine out, or to be excused from attendance during an outing. He was never out of health, except that latterly he occasionally had a short attack of gout ; he sometimes obtained leave for five or six weeks to go through a milk diet at Liancourt ; and four or five times in his life he was allowed to go to his place at Verteuil, in Poitou, of which he was very fond. The last time he went there he was recalled in less than a week by a note from the King, who wrote that he was suffering from a carbuncle, and wanted his company as his personal friend. Three or four times in the year he went to dine at Paris ; and rather

more frequently at a little house near Versailles, whither the King sometimes accompanied him ; but he never slept there. He kept open house in his apartments at Court, from morning till night. He was too kind a master to his servants ; they were spoilt, and the principal ones gave themselves insufferable airs. The necessity for showing them some attention kept people in good society away, except for indispensable visits of politeness. This left the field open for all the idlers and bores about the Court, with a mixture of persons of inferior degree ; all of them people who would hardly have been received anywhere else. They took possession of his apartments, had their meals there, and submitted meekly to his outbursts of ill-temper ; for he domineered over them roughly. With people of a better class he was never quite in his element ; for this reason, and because his assiduous attendance on the King left him little spare time, it had come to be an understood thing that he paid no visits ; Cardinal de Coislin, M. de Bouillon, and Marshal de Lorge were almost the only exceptions to this rule. As for ladies, he could not bear them ; he would hardly speak to those nearly related to him, even when he met them by chance, which was not very often. The Maréchale de Lorge and Mademoiselle de Bouillon were the only ladies who found grace in his sight, except Madame de Sforza ; he used sometimes to go and chat with her, and she came to see him. This was because of his old friendship with her mother, Madame de Thianges, and Madame de Montespan.

One would have thought that he ought to be happy ; but no one was ever less so. He was extremely cross-grained ; everything rubbed him up the wrong way. He would lose his temper over the most trifling and accidental occurrences. He was so accustomed to get everything he wanted that all the favours he obtained for himself and others were of no value in his eyes. At the same time, he was the most jealous of men ; a favour bestowed on any one else, even such as could be of no possible use to himself, distressed him beyond words ; it vexed him to hear of a Bishopric, or an Abbey disposed of ; in fact, he was born tormented by jealousy. If any good thing fell in the way of one of his rivals, such as M. de Chevreuse, M. de Beauvilliers, the Grand Equerry, or Marshal Villeroy, he could not conceal his annoyance. His jealousy made him hate

the first three ; the Marshal treated him with great respect, and he did not hate him quite so much. A certain friendship always subsisted between M. le Prince, the Prince of Conti, and himself ; it was a survival of the old community of opinions between their fathers, and it made no outward show.

Towards the end his low friends and servants abused his kindness, and made him importune the King for favours for them ; his demands were often improper and unbecoming. The King had to refuse them, and to submit to complaints and reproaches in consequence. This sometimes made the relations between them rather unpleasant, and put thoughts of retiring into M. de la Rochefoucauld's head ; which, however, he never seriously entertained. His sight had become very bad, and he could no longer ride ; he used to follow the hounds in a light carriage, and if they did not kill he was in a state of frenzy till the next day's hunting which ended successfully. When the stag was killed he used to be helped out of his carriage and led up to the King, to present the foot, which, as often as not, he would stick into the King's eye or ear. Sometimes the King ventured to suggest gently that he ought to take more repose. These hints went to the heart of the favourite, who felt that he could no longer serve the King properly on account of his blindness, and was becoming burdensome to him. At last he did retire, but he made an unfortunate choice of a retreat. He hesitated between his house at Paris and the Monastery of St. Geneviève, where the memory of Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld would have procured him all the attentions he required. At either place he would have had plenty of company and assistance, but neither would have suited his servants ; they wanted to have him in a place from which they could make him go and ask the King for favours for themselves, so long as a shred remained of his old influence. They made him retire to the Kennels near Versailles—an extremely out-of-the-way spot, where he was soon reduced to solitude and ennui. Here he ended his life very wretchedly, a blind man, fallen from favour, with no occupations, and no resources in himself, and preyed upon by his servants.

On the 1st of May the King went to Marly, and on the same day Torcy started very secretly for Holland. I do not know how M. de Lausun got wind of it, but next morning I saw him go up to the Duke de Villeroy and two or three

others in the saloon and ask them whether they had seen M. de Torcy. On their replying that they had not, "Well," said he, "he came back from Paris very late last night, and I know he is going to have some remarkable dishes for dinner to-night. I will not tell you what they are, but I mean to try them, and you ought to come too." Torcy had a very excellent cook; he never received any but persons in the best society, but they used to dine with him when they chose, without invitation. The dupes went there late, for Torcy used to work up to his dinner-hour when at Marly, and dined very late. They found the door shut; they knocked; there was no answer. At last they perceived that there was nobody in the house, and went away to seek for a dinner elsewhere, disgusted with themselves for having been taken in by M. de Lausun. In the evening Lausun asked them, laughing, what sort of a dinner M. de Torcy had given them. This joke went the rounds of Marly, and was the cause of Torcy's mission becoming known a good deal sooner than the King wished.

The Prince de Lambesc, only son of M. de Brionne, the Grand Equerry's eldest son, married the elder daughter of the late Marshal Duke de Duras; her only sister afterwards married the Count d'Egmont. The conduct of the Grand Equerry some time after this marriage is worthy to be recorded. The bride's mother, the Duchess de Duras, had a lawsuit with her brother-in-law about her daughters' property; she claimed a great deal, and took up the case very warmly. The Grand Equerry flatly refused to solicit the judges on her behalf, and forbade the members of his family, even his granddaughter-in-law herself, to do so. He said if he could do so decently, he would solicit on behalf of the Duke de Duras; for he had not received his niece into his family to ruin him and his house, and his grandson's wife had sufficient wealth to refrain from ruining her uncle and the head of her family for the sake of 300,000 or 400,000 livres. When the question of dividing the inheritance between the two sisters came up, the Grand Equerry insisted on his son, the Abbé de Lorraine, being present throughout the proceedings, and gave him strict orders to give way, in any doubtful point, in favour of the younger sister; for he said his granddaughter was rich enough, and he did not wish to deprive her sister of the means of making a suitable marriage. This, it cannot be denied, was thinking and acting

like a gentleman ; but it must be observed that Madame d'Armagnac was dead—if she had been alive the Grand Equerry would not have been allowed to have his own way.

Old Saumery died, at the age of eighty-six ; I have already mentioned him. He was a tall, handsome old man ; one of the old school, full of courage and honour. His father, whose name was Joanne, had followed Henri IV from Bearn as his valet, and subsequently became gardener and *concierge* at Chambord. The son got on in the world, and became rich for people of their class ; he married a sister of Madame Colbert, Colbert being still a very humble personage at the time. When the latter became Minister he helped his brother-in-law as much as he could, and finally got him appointed Governor of Chambord and Blois. I have also mentioned Saumery's son, an impertinent, conceited person, who had been wounded in the knee in one of M. de Turenne's battles. He used to boast of things said to him in confidence by distinguished personages, who had probably never even heard his name ; especially M. de Turenne, whom he always called " M. Turenne," or " the old Viscount," or " the poor old Viscount." I was staying with the Duke de Chevreuse once at Dampierre, when Saumery was there. He was holding forth in his usual strain about M. de Turenne ; and, although his silly conceit was nothing new to us, we could not refrain from amusing ourselves by leading him on from one impertinence to another. We were in fits of laughter all the time, which he attributed to the witty stories he was telling us with a marvellous air of dignity and importance. Next morning Sassenage, Louville, little Renaud and I were in Madame de Chevreuse's drawing-room talking over Saumery's absurdities. We were standing in the recess of a window, concealed by a curtain ; after we had been talking pretty freely for some time, little Renaud said : " We should be rather taken aback if M. de Saumery had been listening to us, and suddenly drew back the curtain ! " The words were hardly out of his mouth before the thing happened. We all burst out laughing ; and Saumery, who very likely had not heard our conversation, asked what it was all about. We laughed more than ever ; and the other people in the room, who knew what we had been talking about, joined in, so that, with all his effrontery, Saumery looked quite confused.

The Prince of Carignan died on the 23rd of April in his

seventy-ninth year. He was the son of Prince Thomas, son of the famous Charles Emmanuel, Duke of Savoy, and his mother was sister to the last Count de Soissons, and the last Princess of the Blood of this junior branch of Bourbon. He was born deaf and dumb ; and this cruel infirmity was the more painful to his family because, so far as is possible for a person in that condition, he gave signs of having much sense and intelligence. After trying all sorts of remedies they gave him up to the care of a man who undertook to make him speak and understand what was said to him, provided that he had sole charge of him for several years, and no questions were asked as to his methods. The fact is that this man treated him as trainers do those animals one sees from time to time, which perform astonishing tricks, and seem to understand all their master says. He used severe punishments, beating, privation of food and light, and corresponding rewards. He succeeded perfectly ; so that the Prince could understand everything that was said to him by watching the movement of the lips, assisted by a few signs ; he could read and write, and even speak with some difficulty. He applied himself to study with so much zeal, acuteness, and intelligence that he understood several languages, knew something of science, and learnt history thoroughly. His sagacity in political matters was such that he was constantly consulted on affairs of State, and the respect with which he was regarded at Turin was due more to his ability than to his birth. He held his little Court there with dignity throughout his long life, and may be regarded as a prodigy. He married a lady of the family of Este-Modena ; his widow sent a gentleman to inform the King of his death, with a letter from his son ; which the King answered. The King went into mourning in black for a fortnight.

The Duke de la Trémouille, whom I have had occasion to mention more than once, died at the age of fifty-four ; I regretted his death extremely. Since our contest with M. de Luxembourg had brought us together we had always been great friends, notwithstanding the disparity of our ages. He was a very tall man, well proportioned, and with an air of dignity ; in spite of a very common-looking face, he was unmistakably a great nobleman. His natural ability was not great, but his deficiencies in that respect were made up for by his strong sense of honour and dignity ; his conduct

was always straightforward and honourable, and he was respected by everybody ; even by the King and his Ministers, whom he never went out of his way to please. He left only one son, whom, in spite of his youth, the King allowed to succeed him in his office of First Gentleman of the Chamber, and a daughter, married to the Duke d'Albret.

The Duke de Brissac followed him not long afterwards. Some months before, at Meudon, he had led me out on to the terrace when Monseigneur rose from dinner, and apologised to me for his conduct in going to law with me, after all the trouble I had taken to ensure his succession to the dignity of Duke and Peer. He died suddenly of an apoplectic stroke, just as he was getting into his carriage to go to Meudon ; aged forty-one years.

In the terrible straits to which France was reduced by the unfortunate results of the campaign, and by the famine and misery which prevailed this year, the King and Queen of Spain began to fear lest they should be abandoned to their own resources ; and indeed that course had been quietly discussed for some time. Their suspicions led them to assure themselves of the fidelity of the Spaniards by reviving an ancient custom known as swearing to the Prince : that is, swearing allegiance to the Prince of the Asturias, who was not quite two years old, acknowledging him as the future King and heir-apparent to the monarchy. The Cortes, or States-General, were assembled for that purpose in the church of the palace of Buen-Retiro, on the 7th of April ; and the ceremony was performed with great pomp and magnificence. After Mass the little Prince was confirmed by the Patriarch of the Indies—a strangely premature function. Shortly afterwards the Spanish troops captured the citadel of Alicante, the town having been in their possession since the previous autumn. This success was followed by one still greater : the Portuguese army attacked the Spanish forces under the Marquis de Bay, and though superior in number, was completely defeated. The whole of the enemy's cavalry took to flight, abandoning three English regiments, which were captured, together with eight or nine hundred Portuguese. The enemy lost four or five thousand killed ; the loss of the Spaniards was comparatively small.

About the middle of March Marshal Villars, who was to command in Flanders under Monseigneur, went off there

to arrange matters for the campaign. He found the troops unpaid, and it had been impossible to create magazines. Nevertheless, when he returned he began his usual braggadocio, declaring that only a battle could save the State, and that he intended to fight one in the plains of Lens as soon as the campaign opened. His gasconading struck terror into all sensible people, at the thought of the last resources of the country being entrusted to such hands. It was not that he did not fully realise what a serious task he was undertaking, but he thought he could impose on the public, perhaps also on the enemy, who would hear of his talk ; reassure the King and Madame de Maintenon, and give people a great idea of his capacity. He did some work with the King, and also with Monseigneur, letting it be understood that he did nothing without giving the latter a full report ; and this Prince was pleased that people should think he was consulted about serious affairs. Following Villars' example, Chamillart and Desmarets also spoke to him about business which concerned their respective offices.

Harcourt had prudently refused the command of the army in Flanders, saying that, as he had seen no active service for a long time, and had never commanded a large army, he did not feel equal to so great a responsibility. He preferred to command the army on the Rhine, which was as little exposed to untoward events as an army can be, and use his opportunities to win the affection of the Duke of Burgundy. To effect this he used the same means which Villars employed with Monseigneur ; he worked with the young Prince, but, like a cunning fellow, he went further : he suggested that the Duchess of Burgundy should be present while they were at work, and so won both their hearts at once. He kept back the most important matters for her opinion, praised everything she said, and did his utmost to convince her of his devotion. She was highly flattered by this conduct ; she was already well disposed towards him, knowing the friendship that existed between him and Madame de Maintenon, and it gratified her to feel that she was held in respect and consulted by persons of distinction.

The choice of Generals was much approved by the public, and I approved of it too ; but I was sorry that Chamillart should have given Harcourt an opportunity to take possession of the Duke of Burgundy, and perhaps to undermine his affection for the Duke de Beauvilliers. Chamillart told

me himself that he did so because he thought it advisable to remove this censorious critic from the Court. But the poor man did not see that, by giving him the command of this army under the Duke of Burgundy, he was in reality strengthening Harcourt's position at Court, on account of the opportunities it afforded him for discussing public affairs with the Duke and Duchess of Burgundy and Madame de Maintenon, and making them forget their resentment against him for having taken the side of Vendôme. For some little time rumours had been in circulation that Chamillart would soon be dismissed, and that d'Antin would be his successor. I had warned his daughter, Madame Dreux, the only member of his family who had a grain of common sense. Madame Chamillart, who had very little intelligence or knowledge of the world, took offence if one ventured to give her advice ; his brothers were idiots ; his son too young and confiding, and his other daughters too feather-brained ; and he himself trusted in the King as a support which could never fail him, and prided himself on despising the opinion of the world. I had also warned Madame Dreux of the Duchess of Burgundy's resentment against her father ; she spoke about it to the Duchess, who replied coldly that she was misinformed ; and Madame Dreux had to be content with that answer. I begged her to persuade her father to speak to the King about these rumours concerning d'Antin ; and at last, in spite of his feeling of security, he did so ; but he only half did it ; he mentioned the rumours, but committed the fatal mistake of mentioning no names. One good thing he did : he begged the King, if unfortunately he should come to the conclusion that he was no longer useful to his service, to tell him so freely, without any regard for his personal feelings. The King seemed touched by this, assured him of his friendship and esteem, and sent him away satisfied ; and, to all appearances, on a better footing with him than ever. I do not know whether Chamillart had really been near his downfall, and whether this conversation saved him for the time ; but from that day the rumours about him ceased, and he was considered to be once more firmly established.

But these flattering appearances were not sufficient to reassure me. I knew for an absolute certainty that Madame de Maintenon and the Duchess of Burgundy hated him ; and apart from them, he had some keen sleuth-hounds on his track. Marshal Boufflers had never liked him, and

thought he had personal reasons for resentment against him in connection with the defence of Lille. Moreover, he was honestly persuaded that Chamillart's ability was insufficient for the task imposed upon him ; and, encouraged by Madame de Maintenon and Harcourt, he thought that in declaiming against the Minister he was doing his duty as a good citizen.

Harcourt used to say the most biting and sarcastic things about Chamillart in Madame de Maintenon's room, knowing well that he did not displease her by doing so. She asked him whom he would make Minister in his place. "M. Fagon, Madame," he answered drily. She laughed, but told him that it was no subject for joking. "I am not joking in the least," said Harcourt. "M. Fagon is a very good doctor, but knows nothing about military affairs ; no more does M. Chamillart, who is a lawyer. But M. Fagon has the advantage of being a man of sense and ability ; M. Chamillart has neither one nor the other. M. Fagon would make blunders at first, from want of experience, but his good sense would teach him to avoid them afterwards ; whereas M. Chamillart is quite hopeless ; he goes on committing blunders which in the end will ruin the State. That is why I say, in all seriousness, that M. Fagon would fill his place much better !" It is inconceivable what harm this sarcasm did to Chamillart. The King heard of it ; so did many other persons, who agreed with Harcourt.

On the 8th of May, to the general astonishment, the King, for the first time in his life, held a regular Council of War in the midst of his Court. He warned the Duke of Burgundy to be in attendance, adding rather tartly : "Unless you prefer going to Vespers !" Those present at the Council were Monseigneur, the Duke of Burgundy, Marshals Boufflers, Villars, and Harcourt ; with Chamillart and Desmarets. The meeting was stormy, and lasted nearly three hours. The subjects discussed were the plans for the coming campaign, and the condition of the troops and frontier places. The Marshals made severe attacks on the Ministers, especially on Chamillart ; who, unaccustomed to such treatment, lost his temper, and raised his voice to such a pitch that he could be heard in the adjoining room. The King did not interfere on his behalf. As soon as the meeting was over Villars took his leave, and returned to Flanders.

There had been several riots and disorderly scenes in the markets of Paris, for which reason more companies than usual of the Guards were kept on home service. Argenson, Lieutenant of Police, ran considerable risks in appeasing a tumult at St. Roch, where the mob behaved with great insolence. M. de la Rochefoucauld, in his retreat at the Kennels, received an anonymous letter containing an atrocious attack upon the King, warning him, in so many words, that a Ravallac might still be forthcoming, and eulogising Brutus. Thereupon the Duke rushed off to Marly, where the reappearance of this blind man caused a considerable sensation ; and insisted on showing the letter to the King when he came out of the Council. He met with a very unfavourable reception ; the Dukes de Bouillon and de Beauvilliers had received similar letters, but had shown them to the King without so much fuss, and were thanked accordingly. The King was rather put out for some days ; but finally reflected that people who threaten to commit crimes do it more to terrify than with any real intention of committing them. What annoyed him more was a succession of placards containing the most insolent denunciations of his Government and himself, which were found posted up at the gates of Paris, on the church doors, and other public places. This went on for some time. The King's statues were insulted and defiled ; every morning fresh marks were found on them. Numerous songs and verses also came out, in which nothing was respected. Things were in this state when, on the 16th of May, the procession of St. Geneviève was held, some people really trusting that the Saint would send help, others merely hoping to divert the attention of a populace which was perishing of hunger.

If Madame de Maintenon had done much mischief on a large scale, the low woman whom the Duke de Grammont had married was equally pernicious in a smaller way ; it is the common fate of creatures of that sort. She had been ordered to leave Bayonne, where she had become too notorious ; among other things she had stolen the Queen of Spain's pearls, and she now found herself at Paris, in despair at being excluded from the rank and honours which she had expected from her marriage. Just at this time our Government, to arouse the indignation and rekindle the zeal of all classes in the kingdom, thought it advisable to take the people into their confidence by publishing the

intolerable terms on which alone the enemy would consent to peace, and the very great concessions which the King had vainly offered to obtain it. This was done in a letter addressed by the King to the Governors of all Provinces, which was printed. Its success was immediate ; there was a general cry of indignation ; and people, to show their zeal, talked of giving up all their property to carry on the war to the last. The Grammont woman thought this was a good chance for her to obtain the privileges she so ardently desired ; she suggested to her husband that he should go to the King and offer him his silver plate, in hopes that the example would be followed, and that she would have the credit of originating it. Unfortunately for her, the Duke de Grammont mentioned his intention to his son-in-law, Marshal Boufflers, and he, highly approving the idea, went straight to the King, and offered his own plate, of which he had an enormous quantity ; moreover, he made such a fuss by exhorting other people to do the same that he was generally supposed to be the originator of the plan, and the old Grammont woman and the Duke, her husband, were never mentioned.

This proposal caused a good deal of noise and annoyance in the Court. No one liked to be backward in offering his plate, but every one did it with the greatest reluctance. Some were keeping it as a last resource for themselves ; others disliked the unpleasantness of eating off pewter or earthenware ; the most servile were displeased at being forced to do a thing of which all the credit would go to those who set the first example. Next day the King brought the matter before the Council of Finance, and showed that he was inclined to accept offers of plate. The expedient had already been suggested while Pontchartrain was Controller-General, and rejected by him ; and he now opposed it with equal warmth as Chancellor. He pointed out the very small profit which would accrue to the State in comparison with the loss inflicted on private individuals ; the bad effect likely to be produced in foreign countries, and even on the enemy, by an expedient which would be of no real assistance, and would convey a most exaggerated impression of our exhaustion ; and he reminded the Council of the malignant jeers of the enemy when, during the war of 1688, the massive silver furniture of Versailles, and even the silver throne, had been sent to the Mint. Desmarets, although responsible

for the finances, also opposed the project. Nevertheless, the King came to the conclusion that, while putting no constraint on any one, he would accept such plate as was offered freely and of good-will.

Two ways were pointed out in which one might show oneself to be a good citizen. Those willing to make a free gift of their plate could take it to Launay, the King's goldsmith, who would keep a register of their names, and the number of ounces given. The King made a point of seeing this list, at any rate at first, and promised to return an equal weight of silver when his affairs should permit—a promise which consoled nobody. People, on the other hand, who wished to be paid for their plate were to take it to the Mint, and were to receive payment as money came in, in the order in which they had offered it. Some persons were glad enough to avail themselves of this opportunity to sell their plate without discredit, and make a little money by it in the extreme scarcity of specie. But it was sad to contemplate the loss of all the beautiful workmanship; the mouldings, the engraving, and other ornaments which taste and luxury had introduced. Altogether, there were not a hundred names on Launay's list, and the total sum produced by gifts and sales together did not exceed 3,000,000 livres. Among those who gave up the use of silver plate, the majority kept most of it locked up; to turn it into money, if necessary, or to bring it out again when better times should come. I confess that I brought up the rear. When I saw that I was almost the only man of my rank still dining off silver, I sent plate to the value of about 1,000 pistoles to the Mint, and locked up the rest. I had some plain, old-fashioned plate which had belonged to my father; this I sacrificed without much regret, except for the unpleasantness of eating off earthenware. All persons of rank and distinction took to crockery within a week, and it became extremely dear in consequence; those of lower station continued to use their silver. The King found out that many persons had made false demonstrations of zeal, and expressed himself about them with a bitterness very unusual with him. His wrath would have been better directed against the Duke de Grammont and his nasty wife, the wretched causes of this disgraceful and useless scandal. They were no losers by it themselves; they locked up the greater part of their magnificent plate, and the wife carried all their old plain silver

to the Mint with her own hands, and took care to be well paid for it.

As for d'Antin, who had a great quantity of very beautiful plate, he, as may be supposed, was one of the first on Launay's register; but the instant he got wind of the scheme he rushed off to Paris and laid in a stock of choice porcelain, which he bought very cheap. He also cleared out the contents of two shops full of earthenware, which he brought to Versailles in triumph.

Torcy received orders to notify to Cardinal de Bouillon that he was permitted to come within thirty leagues of Paris or of the Court. This relaxation caused much surprise because it was entirely spontaneous on the part of the King, without the intercession of any one. Before M. de Vendôme fell into disgrace he had spoken to the King on behalf of his brother, the Grand Prior; and at the same time Father Tellier had put in a word for Cardinal de Bouillon. The King had refused both petitions. Some time afterwards he asked Torcy whether the Duke de Bouillon had not often spoken to him on behalf of his brother. Torcy replied that he had never said a single word about him. "It seems very extraordinary," said the King in an irritated voice, "that one brother should not intercede for another. M. de Vendôme often importuned me on behalf of his." The fact is, the King liked to have it thought that a whole family was involved in the disgrace of one of its members; and even when he had not the slightest intention of restoring a person to favour, he was offended if his relations did not intercede for him, and so give him the opportunity of inflicting a further humiliation by refusing.

CHAPTER XIV

1709

A storm brewing at Court—Chamillart's mistakes—He neglects Monseigneur, and offends Mademoiselle Choin—Madame de Maintenon makes overtures to Mademoiselle Choin—General murmurs against Chamillart—His services forgotten—The King resolves to dismiss him—Voysin appointed to succeed him—History and character of Voysin and his wife—Chamillart at L'Etang—His calmness under adversity—Voysin snubbed by the King—My position at Court—I resolve to leave it for two years—Parties in the Court—The cabal of the *Seigneurs*—Of the Ministers—Of Meudon—Abandonment of Spain resolved on in the Council—Remonstrance of the Spanish Ambassador—Decision rescinded—An unsatisfactory compromise—I reconcile the Dukes de Chevreuse and Beauvilliers with Marshal Boufflers—My sources of information.

THE armies were now assembled for the approaching campaign; but, perilous as was the condition of our frontier, things were quieter there than at Court, where a storm was brewing. Since the King had taken the reins of Government into his own hands after the death of Cardinal Mazarin—that is, during forty-eight years—only two Ministers had been dismissed, namely, Fouquet and M. de Pomponne; for Louvois died in office, though his arrest had been decided on for the very next day. Chamillart was to be the third, and, in spite of all the powerful influences exerted against him, his overthrow was perhaps effected with more difficulty than either of the others, owing to the King's strong personal affection for him.

Besides the errors of judgement which procured him the enmity of Madame de Maintenon and the Duchess of Burgundy, he committed another blunder which also contributed towards his downfall: he never treated Monseigneur with sufficient consideration. That Prince, naturally timid, and subject to a father whose jealousy was always on the watch to prevent him acquiring the slightest influence, seldom ventured to recommend any one to the favour of Ministers; when he did so it was only in very trifling matters. He used

to employ Dumont on these occasions. While Pontchartrain was Controller-General he always showed himself willing to oblige Monseigneur, and, indeed, went out of his way to please him ; Dumont was, therefore, very much astonished to find that Chamillart seemed to make a point of abruptly refusing his requests. The fact is that Chamillart, knowing how jealous the King was of Monseigneur, was afraid of being suspected of seeking the favour of the heir-apparent ; and he thought his good-will useless so long as he retained that of the King and Madame de Maintenon. Before long Dumont asked Monseigneur to entrust his commissions to some one else ; and his report of Chamillart's behaviour made Monseigneur very bitter against him.

Chamillart's treatment of Mademoiselle Choin was another mistake which cost him dear. La Feuillade, knowing how useful she might be to his father-in-law, persuaded her that an alliance between them would be to their mutual advantage. But Chamillart would not hear of it ; he told Mademoiselle de Lislebonne, with an air of contemptuous complacency, that he did not see of what use it would be either to Mademoiselle Choin or himself ; he was too old, he said, to make new acquaintances ; the friendship of the King and Madame de Maintenon was sufficient for him, and he did not care to be mixed up in the intrigues and cabals of the Court. Mademoiselle de Lislebonne repeated this to Mademoiselle Choin, who began to see through the innumerable excuses with which La Feuillade had been putting her off. I have already mentioned Chamillart's refusal to promote her brother, for no other reason than his relationship to her ; he rather plumed himself on refusing a request supported by her influence, though her brother was well spoken of, had served with credit as a Major in the regiment of Mortemart, and there was no reason whatever why he should not have been given the command of one of the small, newly raised regiments of infantry. Mademoiselle Choin, accustomed to see persons of the highest distinction at her feet, including the Duke and Duchess of Burgundy, was naturally highly offended, and vowed vengeance against Chamillart.

Madame de Maintenon perceived that she would require all the allies she could get if she was to succeed in her designs against Chamillart ; and, for the first time in her life, she thought Monseigneur might be useful to her. For this

reason she induced the King to promise him the nominal command of the army in Flanders ; it would give him a pretext for taking an interest in military affairs, so far as that army was concerned, without giving offence to the King ; and in this way he could help her against Chamillart. Moreover, she knew that the King did not like Monseigneur's frequent visits to Meudon, especially during the summer, because they drew away a great number of people from Versailles ; she suggested, therefore, that in order to make them rarer, and at the same time gratify Monseigneur, it would be advisable to give Mademoiselle Choin a good pension, with apartments at Versailles, and ask her to Marly. This would enable Monseigneur to see her openly, and he might be induced to stay more at Versailles.

Up to that time these two singular personages had made a point of ignoring each other ; so both Monseigneur and Mademoiselle Choin felt highly flattered by Madame de Maintenon's change of disposition. Her offers, however, were declined. Monseigneur, by accepting them, would have lost the liberty which he enjoyed at Meudon ; and Mademoiselle Choin, instead of the leading position she held there, would have had to put up with one very inferior to that of Madame de Maintenon at Versailles. Moreover, she was afraid lest the dispersal of the mystery which covered her relations with Monseigneur might in time lead to a cessation of the relations themselves ; for her position was not founded, like that of Madame de Maintenon, on the sure basis of matrimony. She therefore declined even the offer of a pension with all due expressions of humility ; saying that, in the present unfortunate condition of public affairs, she had quite enough for the retired life which she preferred. These negotiations were conducted with mutual satisfaction to both parties. The dinner at Meudon, which led to the final catastrophe of M. de Vendôme, was arranged by the King to give Madame de Maintenon, who seldom had occasion to see Mademoiselle Choin, an opportunity of overcoming her scruples by a personal interview ; but Madame de Maintenon availed herself of it to concert measures against Chamillart.

The result was that Monseigneur, for the first time in his life, was consulted by the King in important affairs of State. Even after it had been decided that none of the Princes should serve with the armies, Villars and Harcourt

continued to confer with Monseigneur about the approaching campaign ; for Madame de Maintenon wanted Harcourt to coach him up thoroughly in all that he was to say against Chamillart. For the same reason the King was induced to hold the Council of War which I have mentioned. Monseigneur was much gratified by these marks of deference, to which he had hitherto been quite unaccustomed ; they had the effect of overcoming his dislike to Madame de Maintenon, with whom he had several private conversations. In the course of these the final steps to be taken against Chamillart were arranged ; and Monseigneur imbibed sufficient courage to avenge his own grievances and those of Mademoiselle Choin by telling the King openly that the dismissal of the Minister was a sacrifice necessary in the interests of the State.

All these machinations, and others which I omit, could not go on for long without something transpiring. A sort of confused clamour arose, which no one could trace to any particular source, that Chamillart's blundering had already brought the kingdom to the very verge of ruin ; that it was madness to run the risk of keeping him in office a single day longer, for either he or the State must perish. All acknowledged his uprightness, but none the less considered that he must give place to a stronger man. Many protested that they would always be his friends ; they could never forget his kindness and the favours he had procured for them ; but at the same time they avowed, with becoming delicacy, that they must prefer the good of the State to their own private feelings ; and if Chamillart were their own brother they must give their voices for his dismissal. Before long no one could understand why he had ever been appointed, or how he could have retained his office so long. People talked of the wretched condition of our armies, the empty magazines, the dismantled fortifications ; these indeed were facts which stared one in the face ; but they chose to forget how Chamillart had twice repaired our disasters, and put a fresh army in the field ; once, within three weeks of Blenheim, and a second time within a fortnight of Ramillies. By doing so he had twice saved the State ; but these, and all his other services, were utterly forgotten, as if they had been wiped out with a sponge ; if any one ventured to refer to them a polite silence was the only reply.

I begged Chamillart to speak to the King, as he had done on a former occasion, with the result that the storm had blown over for the time. But his way of thinking was too magnanimous for a man of the gown ; he replied that he did not consider his place worth having, if he had to be always fighting to defend it ; so long as the King gave him his confidence spontaneously he would retain his office with pleasure, but it would become intolerable if he was obliged to plot and scheme to rekindle His Majesty's affection for him. Moreover, he said, in such times as these the work of the Minister for War required the whole of his time and his undivided attention ; if he were distracted by thoughts of how to keep himself in office the result must be discreditable to himself, and disastrous to the State. He had made up his mind to leave the matter in the hands of Providence ; content either to make way for a successor, who might perhaps be more fortunate than himself, or to go on quietly doing his duty. These noble and sensible expressions filled me with admiration : I again implored him to speak to the King, but he would not hear of it ; and from that time I saw that his downfall was imminent and unavoidable.

On Sunday the 9th of June, towards midday, the Maréchal de Villars, who lived next door to us, came in to see Madame de Saint-Simon, and asked if she might come to supper with us that evening, for she thought there would be something to talk about. She said she was just going to dine with Chamillart ; at one time an invitation to dinner there was looked upon as a great favour, but now she thought the favour was on her side. It was not that she knew anything for certain, as she assured us afterwards ; what she said was simply the outcome of the rumours of the day.

That morning, however, the King had taken the Duke de Beauvilliers aside as he was going into the Council and ordered him to tell Chamillart during the course of the day that the condition of public affairs compelled him to ask for his resignation ; he wished him, nevertheless, to remain assured of his friendship and esteem, and his high appreciation of his services ; as a token of which he would not only continue his salary of 20,000 livres, but would give him an additional pension of the same amount ; he would, moreover, take care of his son, to whom he also gave a pension of 20,000 livres. He added that, personally, he would be glad

to see him ; but he thought at present an interview would only be painful for both of them ; he would, however, send for him before long.

M. de Beauvilliers begged hard not to be made the bearer of so unpleasant a message ; but the King said he had chosen him purposely as Chamillart's friend, to save him as much pain as possible. The King, followed by the Duke, then entered the Council-room where the Chancellor, Torcy, Chamillart, and Desmarets were assembled. During the meeting of the Council the King did not betray by word or look that anything unusual was impending ; when Chamillart asked for orders about a certain report he even told him to bring it that evening to Madame de Maintenon's room. The Duke de Beauvilliers remained behind, and asked leave to take M. de Chevreuse with him ; and the King, much to the annoyance of M. de Chevreuse, consented.

About four in the afternoon the visit of the two brothers-in-law was announced to Chamillart, who was writing in his room. Seeing by the consternation depicted in their faces that something unusual had brought them, "What is it, gentlemen ?" he said at once, with a calm and cheerful countenance. "If it is a matter which only concerns me personally you may speak freely ; I have long been prepared for anything." His firmness made such an impression upon them that their errand became still more painful. Chamillart listened to them without moving a muscle, then said with the same tranquil manner : "The King is my master. I have done my best to serve him ; I trust he may find some one else who will do so with better fortune and more to his satisfaction. It is a great thing to be able to reckon on his kindness, and to receive such proofs of it at such a moment." He then sat down and wrote a dutiful and grateful letter to the King, and gave it to the two Dukes, together with the report which the King had asked for in the morning ; after which they left him. He also wrote to Madame de Maintenon, thanking her for her kindness to him in old days, without alluding to anything else, and took his leave of her. After arranging his papers for his successor, and sending messages to his wife and La Feuillade, he left quietly for L'Étang, before any one at Versailles had the slightest suspicion of what had happened.

In the evening the Maréchale de Villars came to see us, and asked me whether I had heard the news. "It is all over

with Chamillart," she said. At these words I gave a cry such as rises to one's lips when one hears that a sick man, whose life has long been despaired of, is dead at last. After we had given expression to our grief, she went to attend the King's supper; and I went to the Duke de Beauvilliers' rooms, passing by the courtyards without links, so as not to attract attention. I found Madame de Beauvilliers in tears and incapable of much conversation. Madame de Saint-Simon heard the news in Madame de Maintenon's drawing-room from the Duchess of Burgundy, who sent kind messages to Chamillart's daughters, especially to the Duchess de Lorge, of whom she was very fond, assuring them that she would do all in her power to alleviate this misfortune. The Duke de Lorge came to us, and stayed till very late. He was not on good terms with any of the family, but said he would do all he could to show his sympathy—a promise which he faithfully carried out. As he was going to L'Étang, I sent kind messages by him to Chamillart, with a note asking him whether he would see us, or whether he would rather be alone for a day or two.

Next morning we heard that Madame de Maintenon's triumph was complete, and that Voysin, her creature, had been selected to replace Chamillart. As he played a leading part up to the time of the King's death a short description of him will not be out of place; and also of his wife, to whom he owed his good fortune.

Voysin possessed the one essential qualification without which no man, with the single exception of the Duke de Beauvilliers, was ever admitted into the Council during the whole reign of Louis XIV: namely, a complete absence of any claim to good birth. He was the grandson of the chief clerk in the registrar's office of the criminal court of the Parliament of Paris; as may be supposed, it is unnecessary to trace his pedigree farther. His father held some judicial positions, and was Intendant of various places. He himself married in 1683 the daughter of Trudaine, *maître des comptes*; and (I know not by whose influence), became Intendant of Hainault. His wife had a pleasant face, with a quiet, modest expression, as of a woman occupied entirely with domestic affairs and works of charity; she was clever, sensible, and full of tact; her manners were simple and insinuating, and she was a past-mistress in the art of bringing things to the point she wished without apparent effort. No one under-

stood better how to keep house and exercise a splendid hospitality, yet without offensive ostentation ; she was liberal in her expenditure, but always with tact and good taste ; her object in life was to conciliate society, and she never let slip any chance of doing so.

Her liberal hospitality and attractive manners made her extremely popular with the officers of the army in Flanders ; to whom she found many opportunities for showing kindness during the sieges, and after the battles which took place there. She was very intimate with M. de Luxembourg while he commanded the army ; and when it became known that Madame de Maintenon was to accompany the King to the frontier, he gave Madame Voysin advice as to the best means of making herself agreeable to her. She turned his advice to good account. While the King was besieging Namur she entertained Madame de Maintenon at her house at Dinan ; she received her on her arrival, saw that everything was arranged for her comfort and that of her servants ; and then withdrew to a separate part of the house. From this retreat she managed the household in such a way as to please all her guests, but never showed herself to Madame de Maintenon or any of the ladies who accompanied her. A reception so much to Madame de Maintenon's taste impressed her favourably ; and her servants, who were equally delighted, never ceased talking to her about Madame Voysin's kindness to the wounded officers and soldiers after the battle of Neerwinden ; her piety, her liberality, and good qualities in general. A lucky bit of foresight and attention on the part of Madame Voysin completed the conquest of Madame de Maintenon's heart. The weather, which had been excessively hot, suddenly turned cold and wet ; a well-wadded dressing-gown, plain but handsome, immediately made its appearance in her room, a present all the more acceptable because Madame de Maintenon had brought no warm things with her. She was charmed with Madame Voysin's modest reserve. She insisted on her coming to see her, and found her conversation agreeable ; but Madame Voysin was careful not to take liberties, never presented herself unless sent for, and never stayed long, for fear of being in the way ; so that at last the clever hostess brought upon herself the pleasant reproach of being the only person in the house with whom Madame de Maintenon had been unable to make friends. She received strict injunctions to

come and see her every time she went to Paris ; which she did, but still with modesty and discretion.

Her husband, on his side, engrossed with the business of his office, seemed entirely without ambition. The time came when Chamillart, finding that he had too many duties to attend to, resigned the management of the business affairs of St. Cyr ; and Madame de Maintenon immediately appointed Voysin in his place. This brought him into continual contact with her, for by this time he had established himself at Paris ; the friendship between his wife and Madame de Maintenon also became more intimate ; people began to have their eyes on the pair, and Voysin was talked about as a likely candidate for any high office which happened to become vacant. He was a man who stood sorely in need of such a wife as Providence had sent him. He had become *maître des requêtes* without much experience at the bar, and had very soon afterwards been appointed Intendant of Hainault ; consequently he was perfectly ignorant of the world. Hard, dry, without a vestige of tact or politeness, and spoilt, like all these Intendants of important districts, he had all the haughtiness and insolence of his class. Never was there such a personification of the bureaucratic spirit ; he was an official from head to foot ; blind obedience to regulations was the only principle he respected, either for himself or others ; he looked upon it as the Law and the Prophets. He was, it must be confessed, an excellent Intendant ; for he was an indefatigable worker, and looked into everything himself. But he was shy and stiff, shunned society of all kinds, even after he became Minister, and was incapable of doing the honours in his own house. Those who had to see him on business, courtiers, *seigneurs*, officers of all ranks, accustomed to the politeness and easy access of Chamillart and the patience with which he listened to the most groundless complaints, were considerably astonished at their reception. He was the very reverse of Chamillart ; he hated being seen, and it was with difficulty that an interview with him could be obtained ; when any one did get access to him he was grumpy, answered curtly and snappishly, and dismissed his interlocutor without waiting to hear anything farther. His letters were equally curt and devoid of politeness ; he thought it a sufficient reply to anything to announce his decision with the brief addition : "Such is the King's will." Woe to any one who came to

him about matters which did not fall within the usual routine of an official ! He felt that he was being taken out of his depth, and cut the interview even shorter than usual. It is not that he was, in reality, either unjust or ill-natured ; but he was bound hand and foot with red tape ; and the supposed wishes of the King or Madame de Maintenon were to him an authority from which there was no appeal.

La Feuillade, that much-beloved son-in-law, received a note from Chamillart while at Meudon, announcing his dismissal ; but was careful not to let out the news to any of the company there. Next morning he went with an easy and nonchalant air to the King, who was just going to Mass, and asked to be allowed to retain the rooms which Chamillart had given him. A curt and contemptuous nod was the King's only reply. His behaviour produced no better effect on the public, and in the end he made up his mind to go to L'Étang.

I went there myself after dinner, with Madame de Saint-Simon and her sister. What a sight it was ! A crowd of idle and inquisitive people, pleased with the opportunity of paying a ceremonious visit of condolence ; distracted servants ; a family in despair ; weeping and sobbing women, who made no attempt to restrain their grief. Who would not have expected to be conducted to a death-chamber ; and to be offered the holy-water sprinkler, to render the last sad office to the dead ! It required an effort to remember that no one was dead ; it startled one to see the master of the house alive, walking and talking in his usual manner, without constraint or affectation, and attentive to his guests as if nothing had happened. We embraced each other cordially, and he thanked me warmly for the note I had written him the day before ; I assured him that I could never forget the attentions and services which I had received from him ; and I can say with truth that I have kept my word to him, and to his children after him. His son seemed quite consoled ; he was less conscious of the insignificance to which his father's downfall had reduced him, than of relief at being delivered from work which he disliked, and for which he was quite unfitted. Chamillart's stupid brothers seemed lost in amazement that the King should find it possible to do without him. La Feuillade fluttered about, uttering philosophic platitudes about the mutability of fortune, in an unconcerned manner which gave as much offence as his conduct in the morning had done at Versailles.

Everything in a Court goes by fashion, and everybody is inquisitive ; the whole Court thought it the proper thing to go to L'Étang ; and, to see Chamillart quietly talking to everybody, one would have thought he was still in power, and giving a public audience. This went on for two days ; but then it became known that Madame de Maintenon had spoken very angrily about the concourse at L'Étang, which she considered a mark of disrespect to herself. Chamillart, therefore, thought it wise to accept the Duke de Lorge's offer of his house at Bruyères, near Ménilmontant ; and we went there with him on the Wednesday. M. de Lorge spared no pains to make his stay pleasant.

That same morning Cani went to pay his respects to the King, waiting with the crowd outside the door of his private room till he returned from Mass. As soon as the King saw him he stopped, and, looking at him affectionately, assured him that he wished him well, and would take care of him ; then, as if his feelings were too much for him, he hastily went into his room. To the general surprise he came out again in a few minutes, his eyes red with tears, and, calling Cani to him, repeated the same assurances, but in much stronger terms. This clearly showed what a wrench it was to the King to separate himself from Chamillart ; it cannot be doubted that, if he would have taken my advice and spoken to the King in time, he would have remained in office. Le Guerchois, Colonel of the Old Marine regiment, had just been made a *maréchal-de-camp* ; he had received many kindnesses from Chamillart, and now wrote to him offering his regiment to Cani, without any stipulation whatever. Chamillart was much touched by this offer, and paid him the full price of the regiment. The young man, strange to say, had not been spoilt by good fortune ; he made himself liked and esteemed by his officers, and served with valour and distinction during the remainder of his short life. The King always continued to treat him with marked kindness and consideration.

Voysin's pleasure at his appointment was soon dashed with a little bitterness. The position of affairs in Flanders had changed, and it became necessary to draw up fresh plans for the campaign ; Marshal Villars sent five alternative schemes for the King's decision, which Voysin received at Marly. He had always heard that his predecessors in office, Louvois, Barbésieux, and Chamillart, used to settle such

matters themselves, merely laying their decision before the King for his approval. He intended to do the same as a matter of course, but when he made the attempt he found he could not. He felt that his experience as a lawyer and Intendant of a frontier province was useless to him here, and that, to decide on a plan of campaign, and the steps to be taken in various possible contingencies, was altogether beyond him. So he carried all the plans to the King, saying that, being so new to his office, he was not ashamed to confess that he was not competent to decide which was best, and he hoped His Majesty would be good enough to choose for himself. That was not the language which the King was accustomed to hear from poor Chamillart, or even from Louvois himself. It was Louvois who, when he was once delivered from Monsieur le Prince and Monsieur de Turenne, had reduced the Generals to submitting their plans to him ; but he knew how jealous the King was of his authority, and how proud of his military knowledge. He therefore adopted the same plan as Mansart did afterwards with plans for buildings ; he contrived, while really doing everything himself, to make the King believe that he was only carrying out his orders and decisions. His son did the same ; but Chamillart really left everything to the King.

The King was, therefore, equally astonished and irritated ; he was angry that a man of the gown should presume to decide questions of strategy, and especially that he should claim the right to do so as appertaining to his office ; for the reason why he usually appointed lawyers was, that he might be superior to his Ministers in knowledge of such matters, and consequently arrange everything himself. He drew himself up a foot, and, assuming the tone of a master, told Voysin that he was indeed new to his office when he presumed to decide such a question ; he must tell him, once for all, that it was his own function, as Sovereign, to give orders on all matters, great and small, and that of the Minister to see that his commands were properly carried out. Thereupon he took the plans, examined them, dictated a reply to be sent to Marshal Villars, and curtly dismissed Voysin, who hardly knew where he was, and was glad to have recourse to Madame de Maintenon to intercede for him, and give him more advice as to his conduct than she had hitherto had time to do.

I had perceived long ago that the Bishop of Chartres was

right when he warned me that certain persons were trying to injure me with the King, and that they had produced an unfavourable impression. The change in his manner to me was most marked ; and though I was still asked to Marly I could see clearly that it was not for my own sake. It made me angry to find that chimney-pots were continually falling on my head, so to speak, while quietly pursuing my own road. I could not discover what crime I was supposed to have committed, consequently I could offer no defence ; through no fault of my own I was exposed to the violent and dangerous enmity of M. le Duc, Madame la Duchesse, and the whole of Vendôme's cabal ; not to speak of private enemies, the jealous and envious reptiles who swarm about a Court. My friends, on the other hand, were either naturally weak or had lost their influence ; for instance, Chamillart and the Chancellor, Marshal Boufflers, and the Dukes de Beauvilliers and de Chevreuse, not one of whom was in a position to help me, with all the good-will in the world. Becoming disgusted, I determined to leave the Court and abandon all schemes connected with it. Madame de Saint-Simon, with more wisdom, dissuaded me strongly ; she reminded me of the unexpected changes so frequent in a Court, besides those which the lapse of time must inevitably bring with it ; and urged that not only my future fortunes, but even my patrimony, depended on my remaining. In the end we agreed to go and spend two years in Guyenne, under the pretext of visiting a property which we had never seen ; in this way we might absent ourselves for a long time without giving offence to the King, let time go by, and eventually take such a course as future conjunctures might render advisable. M. de Beauvilliers and M. de Chevreuse, as well as the Chancellor, whom we consulted separately, approved of this plan ; but they advised us to speak of our departure beforehand, so as to avoid the appearance of acting in a fit of pique ; and also to prevent it being said that I had received a quiet hint to leave the Court.

It was necessary to obtain the King's permission before going to such a distance, and for so long a time ; and I did not like to ask it in his present mood ; but Guyenne was in the department of my friend La Vrillière, and he spoke on my behalf to the King, who gave his consent. Marshal de Montrevel was in command of the forces in Guyenne ; I have already described what manner of man he was, at the

time when he received the bâton. His head became completely turned in Guyenne ; he fancied himself a king there, and, with many compliments and polite expressions, gradually usurped all authority in my own government. It is unnecessary to mention the matters in dispute between us ; I shall have to refer to them again. It is enough to say that it was not possible for me to go to Blaye till everything was settled between this sort of madman and myself. The King had always liked him, and the same reasons which made me think of going to Guyenne forbade me to expect a favourable decision from him, though right and justice were on my side. Two years previously it had been agreed between Montrevel and myself that Chamillart should arbitrate between us ; but the Minister had been too busy to attend to the matter. Now came his dismissal, and with it all power to decide between our claims, even if Montrevel had been still willing to leave it to him.

If I had made up my mind to retire five or six months earlier, Chamillart's downfall confirmed me in my resolution. He was a very great loss to me ; a trusty friend in his influential position was not only a real support on which I could always rely, but my intimacy with him procured for me a certain consideration. Moreover, I was now deprived of my quarters in the *château* : I had been occupying the rooms of the late Marshal de Lorge, for the Duke de Lorge had hitherto lived in his father-in-law's apartments, which the King now gave away ; so that he had to take his own rooms again. Even to visit the Court from time to time is intolerable without regular quarters, much more to live there altogether,¹ as had been my custom ; and in my situation

¹ Courtiers of any distinction were expected to be present at the King's *lever* soon after eight in the morning, and their duties were not over till after the King's supper, which was served at ten ; consequently it was very inconvenient for them to live in the town of Versailles. Only the most urgent necessity would have made them put up with such quarters as were assigned to them in the *château*. The upper stories of the building have been compared to a bee-hive, with innumerable cells ; they were partitioned off into an infinite number of tiny " flats," as we should now call them. In a subsequent passage Saint-Simon describes the rooms allotted to him when his wife became Lady of Honour to the Duchess of Berry ; they were not in the attics, but near, and on a level with, the tribune of the chapel ; and he remarks that they were almost the best in the *château*. They consisted of a small entrance hall, and three main rooms ; there were two other rooms opening out of these, one on each side of the entrance hall ; but they had no windows, receiving light and air only through the front rooms, and like the hall itself they were only half the height of the others, the upper part having been cut off to make some sort of accommodation for servants. What the ordinary quarters assigned to courtiers

it was useless to ask for them. Since the visit to Marly at which Torcy's mission to Holland became known I had been excluded ; the King was beginning to show his displeasure in trifles, probably waiting for an opportunity to do something worse. To go to Guyenne was out of the question while the dispute between Montrevel and myself remained unsettled ; I decided, therefore, to retire to La Ferté and spend a year there, perhaps several, visiting the Court as rarely as I could without failing in the most indispensable marks of respect.

My assiduity in visiting Chamillart at L'Étang, and afterwards at Bruyères and at Paris, had already given offence. He himself had been obliged to leave Paris, because Madame de Maintenon was furious at the number of visitors he received, for she had hoped that his downfall would cause him to be abandoned by every one ; he had therefore gone into the country on the pretext of looking at various properties, with a view to buying one. It was about a month after his departure that I went to La Ferté ; his daughters came there, and stayed with us pending his arrival. When he had completed his tour he came himself, and I received him with entertainments and festivities which I should not have thought of offering him in the days of his power ; but now that I could not be accused of wanting to get something out of him I had no scruples, and he seemed touched by the attention. After staying some time at La Ferté he left his daughters there, and went away to make the final arrangements for the purchase of Courcelles, a property in

were like may be gathered from a description by Madame Roland, who spent a few days at Versailles with her mother, some seventy years later. A friend lent them her rooms ; which, says Madame Roland, " were in the garrets, in the same passage as those of the Archbishop of Paris ; so close to them, indeed, that the prelate had to be careful not to talk too loud, or we should have overheard all he said, and we had to take the same precaution on our side. There were two rooms, and in the upper part of one of them a sleeping-room had been contrived for a man-servant. The approach to them was horrid ; not only because the passage was dark, but on account of the smell from the closets. Such was our abode ; yet a Duke and Peer of France was only too thankful to be allowed one exactly like it ; merely that he might with more convenience stand cringing every morning at His Majesty's lever ! " (" Memoirs of Madame Roland," p. 74, ed. 1864). The permanent population of the *château*, without its dependencies, is said to have amounted to nearly ten thousand persons ; no wonder it was unhealthy ! All this labyrinth was swept away when the palace was turned into a Museum. The position of Saint-Simon's rooms can be identified from his description ; but the rooms themselves have disappeared.

Maine. I remained at home, my resolution to retire from Court being still unchanged ; but my friends kept me informed of all that was going on. I must now give a description of the state of the Court at the time when I left it.

The downfall of Vendôme and Chamillart had the effect of splitting the Court more than ever into distinct cabals. That word is rather too strong, but an expression which would convey my meaning more accurately does not occur to me ; I shall therefore continue to speak of " cabals " to avoid the continual necessity of employing roundabout terms. There were three of these cabals, comprising all the leading personages of the Court, though many of them did not appear in the foreground. Some, a very few, were really actuated by a desire to serve the State ; that motive was indeed put forward by all, but the great majority were influenced only by personal ambition.

The first cabal, under the wing of Madame de Maintenon, included most of those who had taken a leading part in the overthrow of Chamillart. They were supported by public opinion, which had run so strongly against that Minister, and they derived additional strength from the great reputation of Marshal Boufflers, the most prominent figure among them. Harcourt, even when absent with the army on the Rhine, was the guiding spirit of this party, and Voysin and his wife its most useful tools. Behind Boufflers and Harcourt were grouped the Chancellor ; Pontchartrain ; the First Equerry, who had grown cld among intrigues ; his cousin Huxelles, in outward seeming a philosopher, cynical, epicurean and false to the core, who had won the good opinion of Monseigneur by flattering the Choin ; Marshal Villeroy, who had never lost the favour of Madame de Maintenon ; the Duke de Villeroy, urged on by his father, but adopting different methods ; La Rocheguyon, the friend of Monseigneur's younger days, who stood aside with a cynical smile, and set traps for the unwary to fall into ; and the Duchess de Villeroy, who made up for her want of ability by good sense and prudence, and could be thoroughly trusted to keep secrets. She enjoyed the confidence of the Duchess of Burgundy to a very high degree, and had considerable influence over her in many ways. This party may be called the cabal of the *seigneurs*, the name by which it was known at the time.

The bond of union of the second party was found in the hopes inspired by the birth, virtue, and talents of the Duke of Burgundy. First in his affections, and therefore the most prominent figure in this party, was the Duke de Beauvilliers ; but the Duke de Chevreuse was its real leader, and the Archbishop of Cambrai, though in disgrace and exile, its pilot. Behind them were Torcy, Desmarets, Father Tellier, the Jesuits, and St. Sulpice. I will call this party the cabal of the Ministers. Its members were more united among themselves, and they had the advantage of meeting each other continually without arousing attention. Possessing the strong vantage-ground which official position always gave throughout the reign of Louis XIV, they were able to stand on the defensive. But the laughers were not on their side. Their religious scruples were a great constraint to them, and exposed them to ridicule. Fashion, society, and the whole army of the envious, were on the other side, with the Choin and Madame de Maintenon. Moreover, there were cross-currents which gave rise to embarrassment among them. Desmarets, for instance, was on friendly terms with Marshal Villeroy and Huxelles ; and Torcy with the Chancellor, whose opinions he shared on the subject of Rome ; he was consequently opposed to the Jesuits and St. Sulpice, and this created an awkwardness in his intercourse with his cousins, the Dukes de Chevreuse and de Beauvilliers.

These two cabals mutually feared each other. The second pursued its objects quietly ; the first, noisily and with ostentation. All the fashion of the Court and army sided with the cabal of the *seigneurs* ; and an immense number of sensible persons did the same, being led away by the attraction of Boufflers' character and Harcourt's talents.

The third party was the cabal of Meudon ; it was composed of d'Antin, Madame la Duchesse, Mademoiselle de Lislebonne and her sister, Vaudemont, and the whole Court of Meudon. Neither of the other parties would have anything to say to this one, they feared and distrusted it ; but both were cautious how they opposed it, on account of Monseigneur ; even the Duchess of Burgundy was careful to avoid offending it. The fall of Vendôme was a severe blow to this cabal ; not that he was any real loss to them, but they had tried their strength and failed. They had used Vendôme merely as an instrument to discredit and destroy the influence of the Duke of Burgundy ; this design

having ended in partial failure, they were rather glad to get rid of him as a rival for the favour of Monseigneur. I say their design only partly failed ; because they succeeded in discrediting the Duke of Burgundy completely so far as Monseigneur was concerned ; he never showed any favour to the young Prince again, but manifested his dislike for him openly during the remainder of his life. As for Chamillart, they had made use of him while his influence lasted, but cared nothing for him after it began to decline. Made-moiselle de Lislebonne and her sister saw that they could get more out of Voysin than they had ever done from his predecessor, on account of his favour with Monseigneur ; and also because of their secret relations with Madame de Maintenon.

M. du Maine, secure of the affection of the King and Madame de Maintenon, held aloof from all these cabals, treating them cautiously, but nevertheless turning them into ridicule and doing them as much harm as he dared. They knew his character, and all were equally afraid of him. M. le Duc also kept himself apart, being fully occupied with business after his father's death, and also with the care of his health, which was beginning to fail. His ill-temper kept everybody away from him, for people shunned him as they would a mine which might explode at any moment. Neither the Count de Toulouse nor the Duke of Berry took any part in what was going on ; and the Duke of Orleans, as we shall soon have occasion to see, was not in a position to do so ; even if he had cared about it. The Duke of Burgundy, whose time was altogether spent in prayer and study, knew nothing of what was passing on the earth, and derived his impressions entirely from the Dukes de Chevreuse and Beauvilliers.

The Duchess of Burgundy's close alliance with Madame de Maintenon, her liking for Harcourt, her affection for the Duchess de Villeroy, and the respect which she could not refuse to Marshal Boufflers, naturally inclined her to the cabal of the *seigneurs*. But her prejudice against the Dukes de Beauvilliers and de Chevreuse had been greatly diminished by the frequent conversations she had with them during the campaign in Flanders ; and Madame de Lévi, a clever woman, one of her Ladies of the Palace, of whom she was very fond, had done her best to make her think more favourably of her father and uncle. Consequently she was no

longer hostile to them, and her inclinations were divided between the cabal of the *seigneurs* and that of the Ministers. As for the cabal of Meudon, which was identical with that of Vendôme, she would have nothing to do with it ; except that she wisely avoided giving it open offence. This was on account of Monseigneur, and also of Madame la Duchesse, as the King's daughter ; though, as we have seen, she was personally on bad terms with her. D'Antin was the only member of this cabal in whose favour she made an exception, because of the assistance he had given her in the affair of Flanders ; moreover, she hoped he might be of future service to her, on account of his facilities for speaking to the King in private.

Such was the situation of affairs below the surface of the Court at this time. We were passing through a period of storms ; the startling downfall of two men in such conspicuous places seemed ominous of more to follow, at no distant date.

I must now turn to another subject. For some time public opinion had been becoming unfavourable to Spain ; and people were beginning to lend an ear to the specious arguments of the Allies, who were never weary of telling our Government that our support of Philip V was the only obstacle to peace. Nobody, indeed, went so far as to say that we ought to comply with the outrageous conditions offered to Torcy at The Hague ; but there seemed to be a growing feeling that it would be no bad thing if the Spanish monarchy collapsed of itself, and left us free to make peace. My own opinion was quite the opposite. I could never bring myself to believe that the Emperor's Allies were so enamoured of the grandeur of his house as to carry on an exhausting war solely for its sake. I thought their real motive was personal hostility to the King, and jealousy of France ; and that Spain was merely a plausible pretext for continuing the war. To remove this pretext I thought our best policy was to use every effort to succour and strengthen the King of Spain. He had so far been successful against the enemy, his troops were in good condition, his finances in fairly good order, and his people full of zeal ; it would not be difficult, I thought, to place him in such a position that the enemy would be forced to admit the impossibility of dethroning him. But many people would not see it ; in the disastrous condition of France they cherished the

delusion that the Allies were really anxious for peace, provided that the monarchy of Spain were restored to the House of Austria. They went so far as to suggest the dismissal of the Duke of Alba ; the recall of Amelot, the Princess des Ursins, and the French troops, from Spain, and the stoppage of all supplies going to that country. This course would, it was thought, convince the enemy that we were sincerely willing to make sacrifices for peace ; and it was supposed that Philip V, left to his own resources, would soon be glad to return to France.

These arguments prevailed ; Amelot was recalled ; Madame des Ursins was warned to hold herself in readiness to leave Spain ; and Besons was ordered to withdraw all our troops from that country. The King and Queen of Spain were in despair at this cruel decision, and begged that things might remain as they were, at any rate till Amelot had completed some important business in which he was engaged. In the meantime the Allies, or rather the triumvirate which dictated their policy, having not the slightest real wish for peace, put forward the outrageous demand that their troops should be allowed to march through France into Spain, and other conditions equally preposterous. This broke off the negotiations ; but our Government still persisted in its intention of withdrawing the French troops from Spain, not with any hopes of peace, but because they were required to defend our frontiers ; forgetting, that before reinforcements could arrive from such a distance the campaign in Flanders would be nearly over. Besons indeed received orders to suspend their departure ; but he dared not take the responsibility of putting them in the field against Staremborg, whose army was already in motion.

Just at this time the King went to Marly, and some rather notable things occurred during this visit. Madame de Chevreuse was there ; for some time the state of her health had not allowed her to wear a *corps*,¹ without which she could not appear, and she had consequently kept away from Marly. Before that she was always asked ; though never without previously sending in her name, a rule from which no one was exempted. The King at last allowed her to come without a *corps* ; she did not appear in the saloon or at the King's table, but used to see the King every day in Madame de Maintenon's room, or during his walks. M. de

¹ A tightly laced bodice,

Chevreuse, who was fond of the privacy of Dampierre, his house about four leagues from Versailles, had gladly availed himself of the pretext of Madame de Chevreuse's health to avoid going to Marly, till at last the King was displeased on account of the inconvenience to public affairs caused by his absence ; for, as we have already seen, the Duke de Chevreuse, though not admitted to the Council, was in reality a Minister. People were surprised to see them both at Marly on this occasion ; for M. de Chevreuse had been there the time before, and for a long time he had not been seen there twice running.

It was here that the final discussions took place about the recall of the troops from Spain. The Duke de Beauvilliers was the chief advocate for withdrawing them, and he was supported by the Duke of Burgundy and most of the Ministers. Desmarets and Voysin, however, took the opposite side. Monseigneur, who was always bold where his son's interests were concerned, though on no other subject, warmly opposed the project ; but he did not succeed in convincing the Council, and it was decided to recall the troops. This resolution became publicly known the same day, for the discussion had been long and stormy. Marshal Boufflers spoke to the King on the subject ; and he admitted the fact, but was not to be shaken in his determination. The Marshal then went to the Duke de Beauvilliers, and asked him to talk the matter over ; which Beauvilliers, with his usual preciseness, refused to do because he was a Minister, referring the Marshal to the Duke de Chevreuse, who, he said, was as well-informed as himself, and would be glad to discuss the subject. Chevreuse flattered himself that his skill in logic would speedily convince the Marshal, who was not brilliant ; but, instead of doing so, he only succeeded in making him angry, and as Boufflers honestly felt that the question was of the highest importance to the State, he went about discussing it with everybody.

Nothing else was talked about at Marly ; the courtiers, delighted to be able to talk freely about a question of public importance without fear of consequences, took sides as warmly as if they had been personally interested. By far the greater number were against the recall ; and Marshal Boufflers was encouraged by their support to speak strongly to Madame de Maintenon. The Duke of Orleans took his side warmly ; backing him up by arguments drawn from

his own experience and knowledge of Spanish affairs. This pleased the Marshal so much that he told Madame de Maintenon that, after the brilliant services of the Duke of Orleans in Spain, the King ought to consult him on a question which concerned that country. But he did not carry this point ; he was not aware of the fatal joke which had made Madame de Maintenon and Madame des Ursins the mortal enemies of the Duke of Orleans.

All this turmoil came to the ears of the Duke of Alba, and he did a thing which up to that time was quite unprecedented : he went to Marly without previously asking leave, and demanded an audience of the King. It was granted, and he urged his point with force and ability, while at the same moment the Duke de Chevreuse was arguing on the opposite side in the midst of the saloon with any one who would enter the lists with him. In the end the King, surprised by the heated interest which this subject had aroused, did what he had never previously done after a question had been duly debated and put to the vote : he suspended the orders for the recall of the troops, and called the Council together to reconsider its decision. There was another warm discussion, in which Monseigneur took a very strong and decided part. The result was a compromise, which as usual pleased nobody. It was determined to leave twenty-six battalions in Spain, so as not to abandon that country to its own resources without warning, just at the opening of the campaign ; but Besons was ordered to bring back the remainder of the troops.

Next morning, as they were following the King on his return from Mass, Chevreuse took Marshal Boufflers by the arm and said, laughing, as if to propitiate him : “ Well, you have got the better of us ! ” But the Marshal, who was still boiling over, and angry at the unsatisfactory compromise, made such a sharp reply that, although there was nothing insulting in it, the Duke was quite put out of countenance. This incident confirmed the breach between the Marshal and the Duke de Chevreuse, and consequently entailed one between him and M. de Beauvilliers. The quarrel had arisen two or three months earlier out of a trifling dispute between a man in the Body-guards and one in the Light Horse. Marshal Boufflers, tired of the Duke de Chevreuse’s long arguments, laid the case before me for my opinion. I told him I thought his man was in the right, whereupon he

asked me to say as much to M. de Chevreuse ; I did so, but could not make him listen to reason. The Marshal took this matter too much to heart ; and on the top of it came Chamillart's dismissal and this question of the troops in Spain, on both of which they took opposite sides.

The heat generated by this last affair affected the whole of the remainder of the stay at Marly. The courtiers noticed a sort of eagerness about M. de Chevreuse which was quite new to him. They perceived that he was trying to make up to the Duchess of Burgundy, and that his advances were favourably received. There was nothing strange about that ; for she knew how warmly he had stood up for the Duke of Burgundy during the campaign in Flanders, and his daughter, Madame de Lévi, had used her influence on behalf of him and M. de Beauvilliers. One evening the Duchess of Burgundy was amusing herself in the saloon by trying to learn the game of hoca, when Madame Beauvilliers told her that M. de Chevreuse had often played it formerly. Thereupon she called him to her, and he sat with her till one o'clock in the morning teaching her the game. This unusual occurrence gave rise to a good deal of comment, for it does not take much to make people talk in a Court. The members of the other cabals laughed, and said that in common charity they must send word to the Duchess de Chevreuse and the Duke de Beauvilliers, who otherwise would not know what had become of their respective spouses at such an hour.

This cabal of the *seigneurs* tried to overbear that of the Ministers, and for some time succeeded in doing so by sheer audacity. Soon after the Court returned to Versailles from this stormy visit to Meudon, M. de Chevreuse was arguing with a few persons in the King's room, where they were waiting for him to go to Mass. Marshal Boufflers joined the group, and spoke so roughly and rudely to M. de Chevreuse that his own friends were forced to admit that he was in the wrong, though he said nothing positively insulting. All these things distressed me ; for I could not help feeling uneasy as to the possible results of such a quarrel. I feared lest Madame de Maintenon, backed by her cabal, which consisted of bold and enterprising persons, should take advantage of it to bring down a storm on the heads of the two Dukes. I determined, therefore, to do all in my power to effect a reconciliation. I approached Boufflers first, but

I soon saw that I must not try to go too fast. I then turned to the two Dukes, not only with the object of reconciling them with the Marshal, but also to warn them to act cautiously ; for their position was by no means secure. I did not indeed tell them of all the perils I foresaw ; for it would have been unwise to terrify people who were only too easily alarmed.

While things were in this position M. de Beauvilliers came to see me one day, and, as I was alone with him, I profited by the opportunity. I questioned him about all that had happened at Marly ; and he spoke of it freely, but dispassionately. I found fault with the advice he had given on the subject of the recall of the troops ; and in this way I brought the conversation round to the point which I really wanted to discuss, namely, the opposing cabal, who had for their object the overthrow of all the Ministers, and were beginning to assert themselves boldly and confidently. He replied that he looked upon such things with indifference ; he gave his opinion in the Council because it was his duty to do so, but personally he cared very little whether his advice was followed or not ; and he cared still less for the cabal, though he knew that it existed and was likely to become formidable. He reminded me that during the affair of the Archbishop of Cambrai I had seen him in a far more perilous position, since at that time he expected his dismissal at any moment, and I could testify that he had remained unshaken and unembarrassed ; ready, and even willing, to give up public life for domestic quiet. At his age he would not consider it a misfortune to end his days in retirement, but in the present critical condition of public affairs it would be discreditable to abandon the service of his country of his own accord.

I replied that, while I appreciated and admired his sentiments, I thought he was wrong in his conclusions ; if he really thought that at his age (he was sixty-one) it was time for him to give up public life and devote the remainder of his days to the care of his spiritual welfare, he ought to resign his office without delay, and not wait to be dismissed ; if, on the other hand, he thought God had placed him where he was to use his talents to the best advantage in His service and that of his country, he ought to use all legitimate means to defend his position ; he ought not to allow himself to be struck without retaliating ; his duty was to speak plainly

to the King and open his eyes to the intrigues of the cabal ; otherwise he would insensibly lose all his influence for good, and finally bring himself and his friends to the ground. Our conversation on this subject lasted for a long time, during which I spoke to him more openly and forcibly than I had ever done before, except on the occasion of Marshal Harcourt's proposed admission to the Council ; and I could see that I made a great impression on him.

Towards the end we talked over the members of the hostile cabal, and I mentioned Marshal Boufflers. M. de Beauvilliers readily agreed with me that he was by far the best of them ; and asked me rather triumphantly how he could be expected to oppose a man who was most certainly acting in good faith, whatever he might do. " I do not wish you to oppose him," I said ; " I do not like to see two men, so thoroughly upright and well-meaning as you both are, working against each other ; I should like to see you regain his confidence, so that the cabal to which he belongs may no longer be supported in its hostile intentions towards yourself by the approval of a man of his reputation." I went on to tell him, what was perfectly true, that I had always noticed a favourable inclination towards him on the Marshal's part, an inclination founded on esteem ; and I was surprised that he should have been worked up by the others to such a pitch of bitterness. I said the Marshal was an honest, good-natured man, that it was easy to win him over by advances made in a friendly spirit, and showing due respect and consideration for his feelings ; and equally easy to alienate him by an appearance of indifference, much more by any assumption of superiority. I advised M. de Beauvilliers not to argue with him, especially about trifles, because the Marshal was naturally dull and easily provoked by opposition ; and, above all, never to betray any consciousness of greater experience in public affairs or ministerial authority. I felt sure, I said, that if Boufflers were approached with tact and perseverance, he would be pleased by the deference shown to him, and would before long listen to reason. In this way, even if he could not be detached altogether from the hostile cabal, they would at any rate be unable to use him as an instrument in their designs against M. de Beauvilliers and the other Ministers.

M. de Beauvilliers was much pleased with my advice, and, speaking more and more openly, said at last : " Certainly

any one would wish to regain the friendship of such a man, and would spare no pains to do so." He agreed that my plan was the best, and promised to set about it immediately. I took care not to mention any other names, for I knew the mutual antipathy between him and the Chancellor was such as to render a reconciliation between them hopeless. We separated at last ; I left him convinced that he ought to make a more active use of his position and influence ; and for my part I was glad to have had the opportunity of making him see the folly of shutting his eyes to many things going on round him in the Court ; which, trifling as they might appear in themselves, often furnished a clue absolutely necessary to lead one to a just decision in matters of greater importance. That was the fault I had to find with the Duke de Chevreuse also ; I often reproached him with it, and he would defend himself by saying, with his exasperating preciseness, that he had no official position and no duties entrusted to him ; although in reality he had long been a Minister, as he had himself confessed to me, and although he was the guiding spirit of the cabal of the Ministers and regarded as such by the other two cabals.

I noticed after this that they both kept their eyes open, and were more eager to hear the news of the day from me, and to discuss it. They seemed more ready to parry thrusts aimed at them, and even to retaliate ; and M. de Beauvilliers talked more freely to me on all subjects. I soon perceived, from Marshal Boufflers' manner, that they were trying to make friends with him ; though they would have succeeded better if they had gone about it more openly, I did all I could to help them with the Marshal.

What the world calls chance, but what was, in truth, like everything else, the working of Divine Providence, had brought me, ever since I came to manhood, into contact with persons most singularly unlike, and even opposed to, each other. It was so with these two cabals of the *seigneurs* and the Ministers. Closely united as I was with the Duke de Chevreuse and the Duke de Beauvilliers and nearly all their connections ; on the most intimate terms with Chamillart, even when his fortunes were at their lowest ebb ; regarded with favour by the Jesuits, by the Duke of Burgundy, and, although I had no personal acquaintance with him, by the Archbishop of Cambrai, my heart was with that cabal which could rely on the Duke of Burgundy as

their friend against all enemies and in any circumstances. But I had many friends in the other cabals too ; the Chancellor gave me his old confidence ; I was extremely intimate with the Duke and Duchess de Villeroy, and, through them, with the Duke de la Rocheguyon ; I was on friendly terms with the First Equerry, Dumont, and Bignon, the last two of whom were in all the secrets of the cabal of Meudon. I could not, therefore, wish for the complete annihilation of either of the two other cabals ; especially as the persevering advances made to me by Harcourt showed me that I had nothing to fear from him. All these, with the exception of Harcourt, spoke to me most freely ; I often heard more of what was going on from the Chancellor and Marshal Boufflers than from the Dukes de Chevreuse and de Beauvilliers, who were always unobservant and often ignorant. I took care to observe the most scrupulous secrecy with regard to anything I heard ; so that they all trusted me, and talked as openly before me as if I had no friends in the other cabals ; but they spared those whom they knew to be my friends out of consideration for me ; if an occasional disparaging remark was made about them in the heat of the moment I pretended not to hear it.

Besides these important acquaintances, I knew all the ladies of the Duchess of Burgundy's circle who were most intimate with her ; so that I not only heard what went on day by day in that interesting quarter, but I became acquainted with many of the secrets of Madame de Maintenon's sanctuary. Even the merest trash from these sources was not without interest ; it often contained something which threw light on more important matters. I also heard a good deal of what passed in the King's private circle, through some of the principal valets of the household, who had admission at all hours to the King's room, and did not fail to keep their eyes and ears open. In this way I heard all that was going on from day to day through the most direct and trustworthy channels. To say nothing of other motives, I liked to gratify my curiosity ; for it must be confessed that, whether one is a great personage or not, it is only by food of this sort that one can live in a Court ; without it existence would languish and become unendurable.

CHAPTER XV

1709

Position of the Duke of Orleans—His licentiousness and reprehensible experiments in magic—He makes an enemy of Madame des Ursins—His acquaintance and intercourse with the English General—The King informs him that he had better not return to Spain—Renaut and Flotte—Arrest of Flotte—Clamour against the Duke of Orleans—His confession to me—Monseigneur's animosity against him—The King decides to bring him to trial—The Chancellor consults me—My advice to him—The project of a trial is dropped—Return of Amelot—The Ministers tremble for their places—I decide to retire to La Ferté—Madame de Saint-Simon consults the Duchess of Burgundy—Her kindness—False reports about me—M. and Madame d'O—Marriage of a Cardinal—Pretensions of the Duchess of Mantua—She has to apologise.

I MUST now go back a little. Up to the present I have not alluded to the misfortunes which befell the Duke of Orleans in connection with Spain, thinking it better to reserve the story till I could relate it consecutively. The affair came to a crisis just at this time ; from it sprang all the bitterness and trouble which pursued him throughout the remainder of his life, for he suffered from its after-effects even when invested with the sovereign authority of the kingdom. It would be premature to describe his character in this place ; it is enough to say that his enforced idleness had driven him to seek for amusement in chemical experiments and very reprehensible attempts to penetrate the secrets of the future, as well as in debauchery, in the company of his mistress, Madame d'Argenton, and other evil associates. Moreover, his general bearing showed a licentious contempt for the Court and its conventionalities, and a want of respect for his wife, which had produced a very unfavourable impression on the public, and on the King in particular.

When he was appointed to the command of our forces in Spain the King expressed a wish that he should keep on good terms with Madame des Ursins, and not interfere in any matters which did not concern the army. These orders were scrupulously obeyed. Madame des Ursins did all she

could to please him ; in her letters to me she used to sing his praises in a way which showed that she wished me to repeat them to him. They were both great friends of mine. I considered that an alliance between them would be mutually advantageous, but especially to the Duke of Orleans ; and I took care, in writing to him, to tell him anything which seemed likely to promote it. All went well till his return to Spain for his second campaign ; but then the slackness of the Spanish Government in providing for the requirements of the army, in spite of all their promises, irritated him so much that he let fall that fatal joke which converted Madame des Ursins and Madame de Maintenon into his bitter and irreconcilable enemies. There was no open quarrel between him and Madame des Ursins ; but from that time forth he perceived, from many circumstances insignificant in themselves, that there was a design to injure him, and that he must be wary in his conduct. It was at this time that I warned him of the circumstantial rumours circulated in our Court that he was making love to the Queen of Spain. He assured me they were untrue ; and indeed no one in Spain had ever heard of them.

He had no difficulty in perceiving that Madame des Ursins was both hated and feared in Spain. Perhaps it was merely idle curiosity which made him lend an ear to some of the malcontents there ; but Princes are greedy of popularity above all other men. His praises were in the mouth of every one in Spain, and re-echoed in France ; his ability and industry, his courage, both moral and physical, his good-nature and easy access, were lauded up to the skies ; perhaps he mistook for real affection what was in reality merely the homage paid by ambition to a man of his rank and influence. I do not know how far he was seduced by all this flattery ; but its effect was to make him more accessible to dissatisfied persons, though he did not try to use them for personal objects.

Stanhope, the General of the English forces and second-in-command to Staremberg, had formerly been much given to debauchery. As a young man he had spent some time at Paris ; there he made the acquaintance of the Abbé Dubois, who had introduced him to the Duke of Orleans ; and during the winter they had many lively adventures together. When they found themselves in opposite camps in Spain they did not forget old times, but took every

opportunity of flags of truce, exchanges of prisoners, and so on, to send each other friendly messages.

In the meantime the Duke of Orleans became the rallying-point for all who were dissatisfied with the Government, and hostile to Madame des Ursins. He made no attempt to disguise the fact ; so little that when he returned to Madrid after the campaign he openly interceded for these persons, and obtained pardon and favours for some of them. When Madame des Ursins remonstrated with him in the presence of the King and Queen of Spain, he said he thought he was rendering them a service by providing these malcontents with a half-way house between Madrid and Barcelona ; for it was only his influence that kept them from siding openly with the Archduke. They made no attempt to deny the truth of this argument ; on the contrary, he was requested to continue his relations with the discontented party ; and when he went away the King and Queen parted with him apparently on the best of terms, and begged him to return as soon as possible. In the belief that his absence would be short he left his equipages in charge of a man called Renaut. I never saw him ; but he had been described to me as a clever, enterprising rascal ; bold, active, and intelligent. We shall soon have occasion to see that sound judgement was not one of his qualities.

Towards the end of the winter the King asked his nephew what sort of a man this Renaut was, and why he had not brought him back ; adding that he had better send for him, as he was an intriguing fellow and was giving trouble to Madame des Ursins. The Duke of Orleans replied that he intended to do so, and sent Renaut orders to come back. Renaut wrote to say that he was just starting ; and the Duke of Orleans thought no more about the matter. Some time afterwards the King asked him whether he wished very much to return to Spain ; to which he replied in general terms, expressing his desire to be employed, but showing no particular preference for Spain. It did not occur to him that the King had any special reason for asking the question. He told me what he had said, and I blamed the vagueness of his answer ; for it was of the greatest importance to him that he should continue to serve, and Spain was the only place where he could command in chief ; for at that time Monseigneur and the Duke of Burgundy were destined for the Rhine and Flanders.

A few days later the King asked him how he thought he stood with Madame des Ursins. He replied that he had no reason to suppose her to be unfriendly ; whereupon the King said that, nevertheless, she had made a particular request that he should not return to Spain ; because, although she had done all she could to please him, he and his secretary Renaut were continually intriguing with her enemies. The Duke of Orleans replied that he was very much surprised to hear this ; he had scrupulously observed His Majesty's commands to abstain from interference in politics, and had done his best to avoid giving offence to Madame des Ursins ; he told the King of the explanation he had had with her, in the presence of their Catholic Majesties, and how all three had requested him to continue his intercourse with the discontented party. He added that he was indeed aware that Madame des Ursins had used public money for improper purposes, and engaged in intrigues dangerous to the Spanish monarchy ; but, in compliance with His Majesty's commands, he had hitherto refrained from saying anything about these things, and would not have done so now but for Madame des Ursins' unfounded complaints against him. After a moment's reflection the King said that, on the whole, he thought it would be better for him not to return to Spain ; the future of that country was uncertain ; it was possible that Philip V might be compelled to leave it, but if it turned out otherwise it would be necessary to inquire into the whole system of Government there, and in that case he should be glad to consult his nephew. Soon afterwards it was announced publicly that the Duke of Orleans was not to go back, as the French troops were to be withdrawn from Spain. The King then told him to send for his equipages, and to choose a trustworthy person for the purpose, who might be the bearer of protests on behalf of his own reversionary rights to the Crown of Spain, in the event of Philip V being compelled to abdicate. So, at least, the Duke of Orleans told me at the time ; but I am bound to say that few people believed this story.

The Prince chose for this commission a man named Flotte, whom I never saw, because I had no intercourse with any of his household ; he had, however, been in the service of M. de Lausun, who thought highly of him, and told me that he was clever and enterprising ; he had been one of the chief agents in all the most important affairs between

M. de Lausun and Mademoiselle. He had subsequently been with Monsieur, and had served as confidential *aide-de-camp* to the Duke of Orleans in Italy and Spain. This man, on his arrival in Spain, went straight to Madrid, expecting to meet Renaut there, but could hear nothing of him ; he then went to the headquarters of the French troops and reported himself to Marshal Besons, for whom, however, he had no letters. He stayed there for more than three weeks, to the surprise of Besons, who could see no ostensible reason for so long a delay, and urged him to hasten his return to France. Flotte at last asked for an escort to enable him to travel with an officer of the commissariat, who also intended to recross the Pyrenees. They started accordingly with an escort of twenty dragoons ; but had not gone very far before they were overtaken by two squadrons of Spanish cavalry. Their commander asked the officer of the escort, very civilly, not to make useless resistance, as he had positive orders to arrest Flotte, who was forthwith conducted to prison. The Marquis d'Aguila, who commanded the Spanish troops, went at once to Besons and apologised for what had happened, showing him an order in the handwriting of the King of Spain for the arrest of Flotte. Besons, though highly offended, merely said that Flotte, whom he had always considered a man of sense, must be guilty of some very serious offence for the King of Spain to have taken such high-handed proceedings against a member of the Duke of Orleans' staff. He took advantage of a special courier to tell the Duke of Orleans what had happened, adding that his report to the King would be sent by the ordinary post, which would not arrive till nearly a week after the courier.

The King received the news on the 12th of July, and at once spoke to his nephew, who had had time to prepare himself. He expressed his astonishment that a member of his staff should be arrested in such a fashion, adding that he must look to His Majesty to obtain satisfaction for the affront. The King replied that the affair did indeed concern himself personally, and he would order Torcy to write to Spain and ask for an explanation. As may be supposed, this startling event caused a great sensation both in France and Spain ; but the public excitement was nothing compared with what it became afterwards. The Duke of Orleans appeared to look forward with confidence to the

effect of the King's despatches. I asked him what had become of Renaut ; he told me he had received no news from him since his reply to the letter directing him to leave Spain ; Flotte had been unable to find him, and no one knew what had become of him. All this made me suspect that there was more in this affair than appeared on the surface, and that the King was privy to what had occurred. The Duke of Orleans, however, said that from the way in which the King had spoken to him he could not believe that he had anything to do with it ; he thought Madame des Ursins had given us a repetition of her performance with the Abbé d'Estrées' despatch ; she had probably been inquisitive about the contents of Flotte's papers, wishing to know who were the enemies she had to deal with ; and the pretence of a conspiracy against the State was merely a pretext adopted by her to justify any kind of violence. Knowing her boldness and artfulness as I did, I thought this explanation might possibly be correct ; but I determined to suspend my judgement till after the arrival of the reply from the Spanish Government.

Other people, however, did not think it necessary to wait so long ; a furious outcry arose against the Duke of Orleans, in which the cabal of Meudon were the most clamorous. It was said that he had endeavoured to form a party with the object of placing him on the Spanish throne instead of Philip V, who was to be expelled on the ground of his subjection to Madame des Ursins and his general incapacity ; that he had negotiated with Stanhope to obtain the protection of the Archduke, on the assumption that England and Holland would not care who reigned in Spain provided that it was some one appointed by themselves, and dependent on their good-will, and that the Archduke was guaranteed peaceful possession of the remainder of his dominions. This was the report most generally prevalent ; but there were people who went further. According to them the Emperor was to use his influence with the Pope to have the marriage of the Duke of Orleans annulled, on the ground that he had been forced into it ; he was to marry the Queen-Dowager of Spain, the Empress's sister, who was still very rich ; to ascend the throne of Spain ; and, as his wife was sure to have no children, to marry Madame d'Argenton after her death. Moreover, to cut short the inevitable delays in declaring his present

marriage null and void, the Duchess of Orleans was to be poisoned. This last report had its foundation in his chemical experiments and researches. The Duchess of Orleans was in the family way at the time ; she had a violent attack of colic, which gave fresh vigour to these atrocious calumnies ; and it was fortunate for the Duke that she recovered and had a favourable confinement, after which less was heard of them.

In the meantime no reply arrived from Spain, and even the most sensible among the courtiers began to have their suspicions. The King, and still more Monseigneur, treated the Duke of Orleans with ostentatious coldness ; following their example, the greater part of the Court avoided him as much as possible. As I have already remarked, I was in a sort of disgrace at the time ; I was no longer asked to Marly, and my unpleasant position excited remark. My friends became uneasy at my close friendship with the Duke of Orleans, and advised me to see less of him. I knew there were people who were jealous of me, or disliked me, including the whole cabal of Meudon and particularly M. le Duc and Madame la Duchesse ; and I was too well acquainted with their methods to doubt that they would avail themselves of this opportunity to do me all the harm they could, especially with the King. But, taking all things into consideration, I reflected that at Court, as on the battlefield, a man must behave with honour and courage, and, without going out of his way to seek danger, must know how to face it steadily when necessary. My friendship with the Duke of Orleans was intimate and of long standing ; I determined that I would not make the slightest change in my relations with him, at a moment when he was so strangely deserted by everybody and stood in real need of a friend.

He confided to me that several Grandees and other persons of distinction in Spain had made overtures to him ; suggesting that Philip V could not possibly maintain his position much longer, and that it would be well to hasten his downfall and seize the throne for himself. He said he had rejected this proposal with indignation ; but admitted that he had entertained the idea of taking the place of Philip V, if the latter should be compelled to abdicate by force of circumstances. He thought there was no harm in this ; on the contrary, that it would be doing our King

a service by keeping the Spanish monarchy in his family ; and, on the other hand, it was very possible that the enemy would not object so strongly to a French King if he were placed on the throne by the Spanish nation itself without the interference of the French Government.

This confession gave me no very high opinion of the wisdom of his scheme ; and I did not care to hear more of it, even supposing that he had anything more to tell me. I advised him to do his utmost to discover how much the King knew about the affair, and, if he found that he was on the right track, to conceal nothing, but make a full confession, as he had to me, laying stress on the conditional nature of his designs, and the fact that there was nothing in them injurious to the King's interests ; also on his refusal to take any active part against the King of Spain. I advised him, further, to ask the King's forgiveness for not having taken him into his confidence and asked for his orders, excusing himself on the plea that a knowledge of what was intended would have embarrassed the King in the negotiations for peace. I told him plainly that his ambitious schemes appeared to me to be as impracticable as they were foolish ; that he was in a very dangerous position, from which, with all the advantage of his near relationship to the King, it would tax his ability and prudence to the utmost to extricate himself. I begged him, however, not to despair, nor give up the case as hopeless, in face of the general clamour.

He approved of my advice, and half admitted the folly of his designs. He confessed that he had left Renaut in Spain to watch over his interests, and that Flotte was to consult with him on the subject. I heard afterwards that nothing could have been more imprudent than Renaut's conduct. He went about without any precautions whatever, and laid himself justly open to the suspicions of Madame des Ursins, for all his friends were chosen among her enemies. His head was turned by being made the confidant of such an important secret ; he fancied that he was the dispenser of rewards to all who would join his party, and his imprudent speeches betrayed him. He was arrested shortly before the arrival of Flotte, who acted with more discretion, but who, without Renaut to guide him, was working in the dark, and consequently fell into traps which ruined him. The Spanish malcontents who

had seduced the Duke of Orleans into this extravagant scheme seized the opportunity afforded by the partial withdrawal of the French troops to enlist recruits for their party, and behaved so foolishly and recklessly that they were easily detected. The Marquis de Villaroel, a General in the Spanish service, was arrested at Saragossa, and another General, Don Boniface Manriquez, at Madrid, and, what is more, in a church—a sanctuary rarely violated in Spain, even in the case of the greatest criminals. This caused a great scandal, which was just what Madame des Ursins wanted. She and Madame de Maintenon knew very well that there was really nothing in this supposed conspiracy; they felt that only an outburst of public feeling would enable them, with any hope of success, to call for the condemnation of a Prince who, besides being the King's nephew and a Grandson of France, was uncle to the Queen of Spain and the Duchess of Burgundy. Their success surpassed their utmost expectations. Never was there such an universal clamour as was raised against the Duke of Orleans, and all for a piece of folly; for certainly he was not treated tenderly, and if there had really been anything criminal in his conduct it must have come out in the long run; yet nothing was ever proved against him, except what I have related.

No one was harder on him than Monseigneur; as we have seen, he was extremely fond of the King of Spain, and all his surroundings, with the exception of two or three persons, were hostile to the Duke of Orleans. He was entirely in the hands of the cabal of Meudon; and, being quite devoid of intelligence, could be made to believe the most absurd things, of which I shall give a most extraordinary instance when I come to the events of the next year. Mademoiselle Choin, of course, backed up Madame de Maintenon, who, though she did not declare herself against the Duke of Orleans so openly as she had done against Chamillart, took care to let her sentiments be known. The great difficulty in the way of the persecutors was that they could not get the Duke of Burgundy to join them. He insisted on seeing some evidence against the Duke of Orleans; and declared that, even if clear proof of his guilt should be forthcoming, it would be better to hush the matter up rather than bring disgrace on the Royal Family by publishing the crimes of one of its members.

Nevertheless, it is certain that the party opposed to the Duke of Orleans was determined to bring him to the scaffold ; or, at any rate, to have him condemned to death and his sentence commuted by a show of contemptuous clemency which would destroy his influence for ever.

Monseigneur, usually so apathetic, was furious ; he insisted on the Duke of Orleans being brought to trial on a criminal charge. He was supported by Voysin and Desmarets, neither of whom ventured to differ from Madame de Maintenon. Torcy hesitated ; and the Duke de Beauvilliers had even greater difficulty in coming to a decision. The clamour of the public perplexed him ; he could believe anything of a man of such morals and conduct as the Duke of Orleans, and he still retained his affection for his old pupil, the King of Spain. On the other hand, he attached great weight to the opinion of M. de Chevreuse, who liked the Duke of Orleans ; they had scientific tastes in common, and M. de Chevreuse always hoped to bring him back to God. Moreover, the Duke of Orleans had always stood up for the Archbishop of Cambrai ; and that prelate was the guiding star of the two Dukes. These considerations, combined with deference to the opinion of the Duke of Burgundy, made Beauvilliers hesitate. The Chancellor was shocked at the prospect of such a frightful scandal in the Royal Family, but the morals and mode of life of the Duke of Orleans were thoroughly distasteful to him. Moreover, he stood high in the favour of Monseigneur, and did not wish to lose so valuable an advantage. But Pontchartrain, his son, was violently opposed to the Duke of Orleans ; and, as he knew him thoroughly and detested everything he did, this consideration made the Chancellor inclined to draw to the side of the Duke of Burgundy.

The Council being thus divided in opinion, the King did not know what to do. He was pestered with letters from the Spanish Court ; Madame de Maintenon gave him no rest, and Monseigneur was perpetually asking him for justice on behalf of his son. On the other side there was nothing but the wise counsels of the Duke of Burgundy, who had lost much of his influence since the campaign in Flanders ; and the half-expressed wishes of the Duchess, who desired with all her heart to save her uncle, but who was naturally timid and very much afraid of Monseigneur. In the end the King yielded to the well-organised clamour against the

Duke of Orleans, and ordered the Chancellor to report on the necessary procedure for bringing him to trial. The Chancellor remained behind with the King three or four times after the other Ministers had left the Council ; as the ordinary duties of his office never required him to do business with the King alone, this was a very unusual occurrence, and quite sufficient to let the Court see what was intended ; for nothing was talked about but this affair, and all eyes were on the watch.

I used to go nearly every evening to have a chat with the Chancellor ; and we had already talked over this business of the Duke of Orleans, but only superficially, other people being present. One evening, I went there rather earlier than usual, and found him alone ; he was walking up and down the room, his head bent forward, and both his arms in the slits of his gown—a habit of his when engaged in deep thought. He began speaking about the rumours which were flying about, adding that a trial was talked of ; and then, in a casual manner, and as if out of pure curiosity, asked me some questions about the formalities on such occasions ; for he knew I was well up in them, as a matter which concerns the Peerage. I told him what he wanted to know, quoting sundry precedents. He again became immersed in meditation, and we walked several times up and down the room without saying a word, his eyes fixed on the ground, and mine examining him with the most intent curiosity. All of a sudden he stopped, and, turning to me as if awaking from a dream, he said, “ But what would you do if it came to a trial ? All the Peers must be summoned to sit in judgement, and you among the rest ; how would you get out of it ? ” “ Do not think for a moment of bringing him to trial,” I replied, with an air of assured confidence. “ You would only be running your head against a brick wall.” “ Well, but if it should come to that ? ” he said again ; “ and if he really is guilty, what would you do ? ” “ What should I do ? ” I said ; “ there would be no difficulty about that. I should attend the trial, for my oath as a Peer compels me to do so. I should listen quietly to all that went on, and, when it came to my turn to speak, I should say that the question at issue appeared to be a plot, real or imaginary, to dethrone the King of Spain and to usurp his throne ; that such a plot undoubtedly amounted to the crime of high treason, but

against the King of Spain only, not against the King of France ; that I did not consider a French court of justice competent to deal with a case of high treason against a foreign Sovereign ; and that it would be hardly consistent with the dignity of our Crown to hand over a Prince so closely related to the King to be dealt with by a Spanish tribunal. This opinion would, I think, rather embarrass the Court ; and, if a debate arose upon it, I should find plenty of arguments to support it." The Chancellor seemed considerably astonished ; he remained silent for a minute or two, then, turning to me, he said, stamping his foot down, and smiling with an air of relief : " Well, you certainly are a sharp fellow ; I confess that never occurred to me." We discussed the matter for a very few moments and then he dismissed me—a thing he never did as a rule, for at that hour his day's work was usually over, and he was at liberty to see his personal friends.

I seemed to have made so great an impression on the Chancellor that I went straight off to tell the Duke of Orleans about our conversation, and he embraced me warmly. Next day the Chancellor had another private conversation with the King after the meeting of the Council, and this was the last. Within twenty-four hours there was a change in the current rumours ; it was at first whispered, and then said openly, that there would be no state trial, and before long the public excitement died out. The King let it be understood, in semi-private conversation, that he was satisfied there was nothing in the supposed conspiracy, and was astonished and displeased that there should have been such a fuss about it. That imposed silence on gossiping tongues in public, but not in private ; and every one retained the opinion of the affair which his personal views and predilections had led him to adopt. Monseigneur never got over his dislike for the Duke of Orleans, and continued to show it plainly on all occasions throughout the remainder of his life. The whole Court was witness of the King's cold and constrained demeanour to his nephew, and naturally this had not the effect of bringing society back to his side. Madame de Maintenon, Mademoiselle Choin, and their dependents, did their best to keep up the ill-feeling against him, and to spread the notion that to be seen in his company was not the best way of paying court to the King. Consequently he was shunned almost as

much as ever ; he felt his abandonment, but he was too much discouraged by the treatment he received from the King and Monseigneur to make any effort. In time, however, society rallied to him to a certain extent, and he was not left alone quite so much as when the affair was at its height, and his fate still uncertain.

It seemed as though a cycle of storms had set in at Court ; that which so nearly overwhelmed the Duke of Orleans had no sooner passed off than the mutterings began to be heard of another, which threatened all the Ministers. Amelot was on the point of returning from Spain, where he had acquired a great reputation. He had been practically at the head of the administration ; when he arrived in Spain he had found everything in a state of hopeless chaos and confusion, which by his ability and unremitting industry he contrived to restore to good order. He put the finances on a better footing, improved the Army and Navy, arranged for the regular payment of the troops, and by degrees provided them with full magazines. It seemed like a new creation ; and not the least wonderful part of it was that, although he insisted on the most implicit obedience without relaxing his firmness for a moment, he yet pleased everybody so much by his pleasant and engaging manners that he was as popular as he was respected for his ability and capacity. He was always on the best of terms with Madame des Ursins.

His reputation had reached our Court, where a Minister of his tried capacity was very much wanted ; and his recall was no sooner decided on than all the Ministers began to tremble for their places. The office which public opinion usually picked out for him was that of the Marine Department ; not only because of the great services he had rendered to the Spanish Navy, but also on account of the general hatred felt for Pontchartrain. The latter had lost his wife, and could no longer shelter himself behind her ; and his father, the Chancellor, was at daggers drawn with Madame de Maintenon, the Bishop of Chartres, and all the Jesuits. The Count de Toulouse had never ceased to regret having spared Pontchartrain when he had the opportunity of overthrowing him ; the Duchess of Burgundy could not endure him ; he was abhorred in the Navy and by all his colleagues. The only hold he had over the King was that he was the Minister responsible for the secret police and

confidential inquiries of Paris ; and even in that department d'Argenson, who possessed all the King's confidence, kept much of the most important business in his own hands, and earned the gratitude of many persons in respectable positions by hushing up the adventures of their relations or children, which would have ruined them if they had come to the ears of the King or Pontchartrain.

In this situation the Chancellor trembled for his son ; for though he knew his character thoroughly, still he was his son, and moreover his fall might involve his father and the whole family in his ruin. While in this state of anxiety the Chancellor begged me to come and stay with him at Pontchartrain, as I was in the habit of doing pretty frequently, and there he did me the honour of formally consulting me as to his line of action in various future contingencies, calling in his wife to assist in our deliberations.

There were three questions to be considered : first, what should be his course if his son was driven from office ; secondly, what should his son do if he himself was deprived of the Seals ; and, thirdly, what line should he adopt if both these events happened.

My opinion was that, in the first case, he should quietly submit in silence, doing nothing to offend the public, by whom he was liked and respected as much as his son was detested ; that he should be careful not to add to the discomfort which the King always felt in the presence of persons whom he suspected of being dissatisfied, but, on the contrary, try to make him think that he was grateful for not being involved in his son's disgrace. Knowing the King as we did, we felt sure that this behaviour would go a long way towards restoring him to that position of confidence which he had enjoyed before Madame de Maintenon set the King against him ; the more so, because the King still had a liking for him, and had even gone so far as to complain of the cold manner in which the Chancellor received his advances. This course seemed to offer the only chance of ever restoring his son to his former position ; which was not absolutely impossible, either under a new reign, or by one of those unforeseen changes of circumstance which so often occur in a Court.

The second contingency, that of the Chancellor being deprived of the Seals, while his son retained his office, seemed to me extremely improbable. I could see no

reason why the King should do such a thing, nor any one to whom he could wish to give the Seals ; since he had not thought of offering them to his friend Chamillart as a consolation, and a pretext for keeping him about his person. If this very unlikely event should happen, however, I strongly advised that Pontchartrain should not throw himself and his children down a precipice by resigning voluntarily ; but, on the contrary, should hold on to his office, and shape his conduct on the same lines as those which I had proposed for his father in the reverse case.

Whether, as in the supposed alternative, the Chancellor were ordered to give up the Seals, or whether he resigned them voluntarily from annoyance at his son's dismissal, I urged him most strongly not to resign his office as Chancellor. The holder of that office cannot be deprived of it except by a judicial sentence for some crime. So long as he retains it he is still the second officer of the Crown, and the head of the whole judicial bench ; and he and his family are necessarily treated with deference and respect. He is considered as almost certain to return to the first place. Nothing can be more precarious than the position of a mere Keeper of the Seals ; few of its occupants have held it till their death ; and, whenever a change is made, it always seems harsh and unnatural if the Seals are not restored to the Chancellor. Moreover, it was morally certain that in this case they would be restored to him after Monseigneur's accession to the throne, if not sooner. I pointed out, further, that, if he resigned the Chancellorship, he would be considered by everybody to have done so in a passing fit of vexation ; and he would be condemning himself to an irksome retirement and solitude ; for, having once worn the Chancellor's gown, he could not very well appear in society without it, and he would have thrown away all chance of ever regaining his position.

The Chancellor himself, however, longed for retirement, and argued the point at great length, but without convincing me that I was wrong. I wondered at the modesty and self-distrust—I may go so far as to say, the humility—of a man in the highest place of his profession, who had long been a Minister of State, full of ability and ripe experience, and who yet was willing to consult a man of my age, and listen seriously to his advice. I was still more surprised at the Chancelière. Though a really religious woman, she

was fond of society, in which she was much esteemed, and she honestly confessed that she dreaded solitude. Yet she consulted me in as good faith as her husband, and insisted on her wishes not being taken into consideration in any way. This self-abnegation for the sake of her husband's honour—may I even say out of compliance with his wish for retirement—filled me with admiration for the strength of her character.

While I was thus discussing the possible downfall and retirements of others it was high time for me to think about my own, for my situation was becoming intolerable. Marshal Boufflers, who knew all about my disputes with Montrevel, offered himself as an arbitrator in place of Chamillart, and I accepted his offer gladly ; but Montrevel flattered himself that, as I no longer had Chamillart's influence at my back, he could encroach on my rights as much as he pleased. He put off Boufflers with compliments, and finally declared that he would not submit the dispute to him, or to any one else ; at which Boufflers was very much offended. The time was not propitious for asking the King's decision ; so I let Montrevel do as he pleased ; only I gave up all thoughts of retiring to Guyenne, and fell back on La Ferté. Before going there, however, we thought it advisable to take certain precautions.

Madame de Saint-Simon had never been intimate with the Duchess of Burgundy, but she had always been a favourite with her, and was treated by her with kindness and distinction. We knew for a certainty that the Princess intended to appoint her to Madame du Lude's office, if old age and gout should compel the latter to resign. Madame de Saint-Simon, therefore, asked for a private interview with her one morning, to try to discover from her the real cause of my present situation, and whether she could suggest any remedy for it.

The Duchess received Madame de Saint-Simon with all possible kindness, so far as she was personally concerned ; but showed the most marked coldness when my name was mentioned ; she made no difficulty about explaining the reason, telling Madame de Saint-Simon that she heard I had taken sides strongly against the Duke of Burgundy during the campaign in Flanders, and had spoken against him openly. Madame de Saint-Simon was the more astonished at this because she knew that the Princess had

been kept fully informed of what was going on at the time by Madame de Nogaret, and also by M. de Beauvilliers ; moreover, it was impossible that the Duke of Burgundy should not have told her how well satisfied he was with my conduct. But the Princess was easily talked over ; and some honest people had contrived, during the course of the winter, to remove the impressions left on her mind while the campaign was going on. Madame de Saint-Simon expressed her extreme astonishment, and referred the Princess for the truth to the Duke de Beauvilliers, who had had almost daily conversations with her during the campaign, and the Duke of Orleans, with whom I had been in constant correspondence at the same time. She pointed out how Vendôme's cabal, to revenge themselves on me for the unconstrained manner in which I had opposed them, both by word and deed, were now spreading reports to the falsity of which the whole Court could bear witness ; she added that the Duke of Burgundy was thoroughly convinced of my warm defence of his interests, which had procured me some dangerous enemies ; and she thought it very hard that the Princess should be the only person to doubt my attachment to him, especially as she had had so many opportunities of knowing the truth from Madame de Nogaret. This reply produced an effect on the Duchess ; and the same yielding disposition which had turned her against me now caused the false impressions to vanish from her mind, and brought back the real facts to her recollection. From all her subsequent conduct we were convinced that she never fell into the same mistake again.

She told Madame de Saint-Simon that I had many powerful enemies, who let slip no opportunities of doing me an injury ; that they had given the King a most exaggerated notion of my attachment to my dignity as Duke and Peer, and she quoted, as an example, M. le Duc's spiteful remark about the mourning-cloaks, which I have already mentioned ; that I was accused of perpetually finding fault with the actions of the Government, and taking a gloomy view of public affairs. She added that the King liked and esteemed Madame de Saint-Simon herself, but had conceived a strong prejudice against me, which only time and the most cautious behaviour would diminish ; he was told that I was cleverer, better informed, and more ambitious than most men of my age ; that people were afraid of me,

for they saw that I was intimate with many persons in high office, and feared lest I should attain office myself ; that my haughty way of making biting and outspoken remarks about persons and public affairs was insufferable ; and the more so, because I had a reputation for uprightness, which lent additional force to anything I said.

Madame de Saint-Simon thanked the Princess warmly for her kindness in speaking so openly, and pointed out that the attention of my enemies had been first drawn to me at the time when I was spoken of, very much against my will, for the Embassy to Rome, and they had been determined ever since to clip my wings. She explained the origin of the enmity towards me of d'Antin, Madame la Duchesse, and the Lorrainers, who were followed by all the jealous tribe with which a Court is peopled. She told the true story of my bet about the siege of Lille, which had done me so much harm ; and said it was hard that it should be cast up against me, as a crime, that I had a correct judgement in public affairs, and was intimate with men whose friendship did me honour.

The conversation ended with the kindest possible expressions on the part of the Duchess of Burgundy, who told Madame de Saint-Simon how sorry she was to lose her for a time, and promised to lose no opportunity of setting me right with the King. She afterwards spoke so strongly to Bloin about getting me quarters in the *château* that, to please her, he determined to take the first opportunity of doing so ; at least, so he told the Duke de Villeroy and other friends of ours. Madame de Saint-Simon prudently refrained from telling me for some time afterwards that the King's prejudice against me was so strong as she discovered it to be by this conversation, for fear of confirming my dislike to the Court and causing me to leave it for ever. What hurt me most was the atrocious calumny about my opposition to the Duke of Burgundy ; I became more determined than ever to get away from people who were wicked enough to invent it, and longed for the moment when I should leave for La Ferté.

I have dwelt at some length on this conversation because what the Duchess of Burgundy said throws some light on the King's character. Nothing alarmed him so much as a reputation for superior ability or acquirements ; for want of a better, this was the charge which was continually

brought against me ; and it did me more harm in his eyes than if I had been accused of something really wicked and dangerous. Even my reputation for honesty was injurious to me, by the turn which my enemies contrived to give to it ; and my intimacy with the principal Ministers and noblemen of the Court, which might have been expected to give him a good opinion of me, set him against me more than anything. It was d'Antin and M. du Maine who poisoned his mind against me, and they seduced Bloin and Nyert, who did me all the harm they could, though I had never offended them in any way, and Nyert's father, as I have said elsewhere, owed his fortune to mine. M. and Madame du Maine had never forgiven me for repulsing their advances ; they feared me as an irreconcilable opponent of their rank, and this was why my attachment to my own dignity became such a crime in the King's eyes ; this was also the cause of Madame de Maintenon's hatred of me, for she was my most constant and dangerous enemy. The Duchess of Burgundy, not wishing to alarm us unnecessarily, told Madame de Saint-Simon that she would do her best to set us right with the King, both by herself and through Madame de Maintenon ; but in reality she knew better, and was well aware that Madame de Maintenon was the great obstacle. Chamillart had found her so when he tried formerly to obtain my pardon for having left the service. He had many disputes with her on the subject, for at that time he was on the most friendly terms with her, but it was with the greatest difficulty that he induced her, not to alter her opinion of me, but to promise that she would not stand in the way of my being asked to Marly. I had often suspected that she was unfavourable to me, I did not exactly know why, though I was always on my guard against M. du Maine ; but I did not know that she was so bitter against me till after the King's death, when Chamillart asked me what I had done to that old witch to make her hate me so, and then told me what I have just recorded. He never said anything about it while the King was alive, for fear of discouraging me, and perhaps leading me to say something in anger which would make matters worse.

I had to thank M. and Madame d'O for the false impressions which the Duchess of Burgundy had received about the part I had played with regard to the campaign in Flanders. We have seen what sort of people they were.

The husband had been Governor to the Count de Toulouse, and he hoped to make this appointment a stepping-stone to that of Governor to the future heir to the Crown. I heard afterwards, on the best authority, that he and his wife looked upon me as a dangerous rival, and calumniated me in this way to the Duchess of Burgundy merely to undermine my position. I had never given a thought to an appointment which would not be made for another five years ; but these mushrooms of fortune take precautions a long time in advance. However, they never got beyond what they had already, and died wretched and despised. The husband never obtained anything except the Grand Cross of St. Louis, and lost his post of administrator of the Count de Toulouse's household. The wife died in a garret at the Hôtel de Toulouse, having become a sort of servant to Madame de Gondrin, formerly a Lady of the Palace under her control, who had by her second marriage become the wife of the Count de Toulouse.

About this time Amelot returned from Spain, and had a brilliant reception ; but he had no private audience of the King, or only for a minute or two. He went to call on the Ministers. The Chancellor said to him at once, " Well, sir, we all feel shaky in our places ; you have only to wish for one of us to fall, and you would certainly be his successor. But, I warn you, you must make haste to break open the door of the Council-chamber ; for, if you let the iron grow cold, you will never have another chance." He spoke as one behind the scenes, and it turned out that he was right. Amelot spoke to the King about the projected marriage of his daughter with Chalais, a nephew of Madame des Ursins' first husband, and asked him to obtain the honour of a Grandee of Spain for his son-in-law ; he was put off with polite excuses. He was much offended, the more so because he had been unable to obtain an audience about Spanish affairs. He could not refrain from showing his displeasure, and in the meantime the Ministers began to feel more comfortable. He could not make out why he was treated so coldly. The fact is that his enemies, being unable to say a word against his integrity or capacity, had hinted to the King that he was a Jansenist. The slightest hint of that suspicion was enough ; no proofs were required. The accused person was ruined before he even knew that anything of the sort had been mentioned ; it was so with Amelot.

When he found out what was said about him he felt quite easy in his mind, for he had never had anything to do with Jansenism ; but, when he tried to clear himself, he found every door so tightly closed against him that his downfall was complete ; after having practically administered the government of Spain, and made all our Ministers tremble, he found himself reduced to his old position as a lawyer, and making one among a crowd of men of the gown. I never heard who it was who stuck this dagger into his heart ; but when once Amelot was no longer feared calm returned to the Court after so many storms.

Cardinal de Medici resigned his Hat, and married. His brother, the Grand-duke, had only one surviving son, who was childless and separated from his wife ; and they were all that remained of the ducal branch of the Medici. The Grand-duke, therefore, wished this brother to marry, to prevent the extinction of the family. The Cardinal was not in Holy Orders, and was therefore free to do so ; but he was fifty years old, and his marriage with a lady of the family of Guastalla-Gonzagua, though a happy one, proved sterile.

Some changes were made among the Intendants of provinces, which I mention because some of the persons appointed made themselves talked about later on. Courson, son of Basville, was removed from Rouen, and appointed to Orleans, where there was a vacancy. He had all his father's pride and harshness, but none of his good qualities ; he was ignorant, lazy, and brutal. During the famine his dealings in corn nearly got him knocked on the head at Rouen, where he dared not show himself in the streets ; and, from what came out afterwards, it would seem that he did not forget to line his pockets. He caused such disorders at Bordeaux that M. de Luxembourg, the Governor of the Province, had to be sent there, and to remain there a long time. He enabled Courson to make his escape, otherwise he would have been killed. Richebourg, who succeeded him at Rouen, also did very badly, and had to be recalled. Mansart's son was deprived of his Intendancy at Moulins ; he was an ignorant, lazy debauchee ; to shelter himself from his creditors he afterwards enlisted as a gendarme. He was succeeded at Moulins by Turgot, who had been appointed Intendant at Metz through the influence of his father-in-law, Pelletier de Sousi, and had maintained his place there

for a long time by the same influence. His incapacity was so notorious, however, that in the end he had to be removed, and given an Intendancy of less importance. The son-in-law of Foucault, Conseiller d'État, who had succeeded him at Caen, was also deprived of his office, having committed every imaginable folly. His name was Magny, and he drew attention to himself several times afterwards; one of his performances, which forced him to leave the kingdom, will be mentioned at the proper time. These are a few specimens of the Intendants who are put in a position to insult and ruin the provinces; they are too often without capacity, experience, or common sense, appointed and maintained in office by influence alone.

The Duchess of Mantua, growing tired of her convent at Pont-à-Mousson, thought it was time to make her appearance at Paris and at Court. Her mother, Madame d'Elbœuf, was equally anxious that she should do so, reckoning on her influence with Madame de Maintenon, and that of M. de Vaudemont and his nieces with Monseigneur, to obtain recognition for her daughter's pretensions. Her design was to be considered on a footing of equality with the Granddaughters of France; that is, she was not to give the "hand" to any one, nor an arm-chair; and she was not to make a single step to reconduct ladies who had been calling on her. On the pretext that the Duchess of Mantua required fresh air and a milk-diet, Madame d'Elbœuf obtained leave for her to live at Vincennes, where the apartments formerly occupied by Monsieur were refurnished for her. This favourable beginning inspired them with great hopes of success. The Maréchale de Bellefonds had long been living in retirement at Vincennes, of which her husband and son had been Governors. She went to call on the Duchess of Mantua, and was so much taken by surprise at being offered a folding-chair that she sat down on it; but, realising the position in a minute or two, she rose and withdrew, and never set foot in the room again. In the meantime Madame d'Elbœuf was doing her best to obtain that her daughter's reception at Court should be in accordance with her claims; but she was entirely unsuccessful. As I have before remarked, Madame de Maintenon was changeable, and had ups and downs even for her dearest friends; Madame d'Elbœuf chanced to hit off one of her unpropitious moods. Moreover, the King, for a wonder,

showed himself unfavourable to pretensions. The Duke of Mantua was dead ; he had left no successor, and his States were in the possession of the Emperor ; there was no particular reason for conciliating his widow, and the King had not forgotten how her marriage had taken place in defiance of his orders. He was determined not to allow her to get a footing in his Court, to avoid the annoyance of her pretensions and importunity.

She was informed that she might come to see the King in Madame de Maintenon's room, when the Duchess of Burgundy would be present ; that she was to be dressed as if she were at Marly, and to return to Vincennes directly the visit was over. She arrived with her mother, punctually at the hour appointed ; the audience only lasted a few minutes ; the King remained standing the whole time ; and, what seemed extraordinary, he did not kiss the Duchess of Mantua. In less than a quarter of an hour she started again for Vincennes, without having been able to see Madame de Maintenon in private. She afterwards met with an equally cold reception at Meudon. Madame d'Elbœuf, however, was not easily rebuffed, and proceeded to claim for her daughter a chair with a back in the presence of the Duchess of Burgundy. The wives and widows of recognised Sovereigns have always been allowed a backed chair in the Queen's circle on one occasion, but only on one ; afterwards they have to be content with a *tabouret*, and to be in all respects on the same footing as Duchesses. Nevertheless, the privilege was not extended to the Duchess of Mantua ; Madame d'Elbœuf's request was flatly refused on four different occasions. It was hard to be snubbed so persistently after having entertained such lofty pretensions ; but Madame d'Elbœuf had been silly enough to talk of the Duke of Berry as not being such a very good match for her daughter ; and I think that may have had something to do with the refusal of the backed chair.

The Duchess of Mantua never set foot at Court again ; but she determined to play a leading part in Parisian society, and have such rank and precedence there as she chose. Her first adventure happened at the second entrance to the Palais-Royal, where her carriage met that of M. de Montbazon, drawn by a pair of horses, and she haughtily ordered it to draw back and let her pass. As no notice was taken, Madame d'Elbœuf, who was with her daughter, sent to tell

M. de Montbazon that it was the Duchess of Mantua who begged him to go back. M. de Montbazon replied that if he had been alone he would have done so with great pleasure ; but Madame de Montbazon was with him, and he could not admit that the Duchess of Mantua took precedence of her in any way ; he had the greatest respect, he said, for her and Madame d'Elbœuf personally, but no disposition to recognise any superiority of rank ; and he was determined not to give way. Thereupon a wrangle arose between the coachmen, with some strong language ; Madame d'Elboeuf, with her head out of the window, calling out to make the other carriage draw back, and M. de Montbazon declaring that he would get out and thrash any one who came near his horses. Finally, they discovered that the road was just wide enough for the two carriages to scrape past each other, with some damage to the little shops on either side ; and so this absurd adventure ended. While people were still talking about it, and expressing themselves strongly against the Duchess of Mantua, she brought fresh trouble on herself by trying to take precedence of the Grand-duchess of Tuscany. The pretension was as absurd as it was insolent ; for, besides that the Dukes of Mantua had always recognised the superiority of the Grand-dukes, there was a considerable distance between this Duchess of Mantua and the Grand-duchess, who was a Granddaughter of France.¹ Within twenty-four hours she received an order to go and apologise to the Grand-duchess, who let her down gently, as a friend of Madame de Lislebonne's.

She was bitterly mortified at the ill-success of all her pretensions, but resolved at last to drop them ; for she saw that their only effect would be to reduce her to solitude and ennui. She took to going out in a carriage drawn by two horses like the rest of the world, and called personally on ladies without waiting to be called on. When she found them at home she overwhelmed them with politeness, and sometimes made a second visit before her first call had been returned. Among the ladies so honoured was the Duchess de Lausun, who returned the visit when she felt sure of her ground. The Duchess of Mantua received her with the utmost politeness, gave her an arm-chair and the "hand," without any subterfuges ; and, when she went away, re-

¹ She was the daughter of Gaston, Duke of Orleans, and granddaughter of Henry IV.

conducted her through three antechambers. When people found that she treated them politely they soon became reconciled to her ; and she provided an additional attraction to her house by keeping a table for lansquenet, a game much in fashion at that time. She was often much distressed for money, for her pensions were not paid regularly, all the funds that could be scraped together being required to maintain the armies in the field.

CHAPTER XVI

1709

General scarcity—Serious disturbances in Paris—Marshal Boufflers manages to appease the mob—Campaign in Flanders—Tournai captured by the enemy—Boufflers goes as second-in-command to Villars—Dangerous conspiracy in Lorraine—The Imperialists defeated—Mysterious papers discovered—Battle of Malplaquet—Villars severely wounded—Boufflers' despatches—His generosity to Villars—D'Artagnan made a Marshal—Villars receives a Peerage for his defeat—M. le Duc makes an absurd protest against d'Artagnan's title—Boufflers ungratefully treated—The reason—He asks for the office of Constable of France—Visit of the Elector of Bavaria—Death of the Bishop of Chartres—His character—Duke of Marivaux—His sarcastic remark to the King.

THE general scarcity and the high price of bread caused disturbances in every part of the kingdom ; and, though the usual strength of the regiment of Guards quartered at Paris had been increased by more than one half, this precaution did not prevent many riots from breaking out, in some of which d'Argenson ran great risk of losing his life. Monseigneur, on his way to and from the Opera, was several times surrounded by the mob, among whom were many women, calling out for bread. They were so violent that he was frightened in the midst of his escort, who did not venture to try to disperse the crowd for fear of worse things happening. He got out of it by throwing money to the people, and making all sorts of promises ; but, as no result followed, he dared not go to Paris any more. The King himself heard from his windows some rather violent expressions from the mob of Versailles, who were shouting in the streets. Very bold speeches were made in the streets and public places, containing most outspoken complaints against his Government, and even against himself personally ; people went so far as to exhort each other to bear it no longer, for nothing could happen worse than what they suffered already, or death from hunger. To divert the attention of the people, the unemployed were set to work to remove a

great mound of earth which had been left on the boulevard, between the gates of St. Denis and St. Martin ; they received no wages, only a distribution of inferior bread, and not much of that.

On the morning of the 20th of August it happened that there was not enough bread to go round. A woman began screaming loudly, and excited others. The archers superintending the distribution threatened her, which only made her more noisy ; whereupon they seized her, and were foolish enough to put her into a pillory close at hand. In an instant the whole body of workmen swarmed round, the pillory was torn down, and the mob rushed through the streets plundering the bakers' and pastrycooks' shops. The other shops were hastily closed ; the numbers of the mob increased every moment ; and they spread through the neighbouring quarter, doing no personal violence to any one, but shouting for bread and taking it wherever they found it.

Marshal Boufflers had gone that morning, with his father-in-law the Duke de Grammont, to see his lawyer, who lived in that quarter. Hearing of the riot, he determined to go in person and try to appease it, the Duke de Grammont accompanying him, after a vain attempt to dissuade him. When they had gone about a hundred yards they met Marshal Huxelles in his carriage, coming from the direction of the tumult, and stopped him to ask for news ; he told them it was nothing, but advised them not to go any farther ; and then hurried on his way like a man who does not relish disturbances. As they went on, people called to them from the windows to go back, telling them they would be killed. When they got to the top of the Rue St. Denis they found a furious mob, towards whom they advanced on foot ; the Marshal stopped and addressed the people, speaking firmly but kindly, promising that they should have bread, but telling them that was not the way to ask for it. The mob listened, and as the Marshal walked through the crowd there were cries raised of " Long live Marshal Boufflers ! " He advanced in this way, surrounded by the rioters and talking to them, the whole length of the Rue des Ours, where the tumult was at its height. In the end, the mob accepted his promise that he would lay their complaints before the King, and dispersed, with more cheers for him. It was a real service which he rendered to the State. Argenson was on the march to the scene of disorder with some detachments

of French and Swiss Guards ; and, but for the Marshal's courage and presence of mind, blood would have been shed,¹ which might have had most serious consequences. Orders had even been given to the Musketeers to be ready to mount their horses.

The Marshal returned to his house to take some hasty refreshment, and then started for Versailles, driving without an escort ; the crowds in the streets and the people in the shops imploring him to procure food for them, and still crying "Long live Marshal Boufflers !" On his arrival at Versailles he went at once to make his report to the King, whom he found with Madame de Maintenon, both in great distress. The King thanked him warmly and offered him the sole command in Paris, with complete control of the troops, police, and inhabitants generally ; but the Marshal, with great magnanimity, declined, telling the King that Paris already had a Governor, the Duke de Tresmes, whose authority and functions had been shamefully usurped by the Lieutenant of Police and the Provost of the Merchants, and that he would prefer to act under him. The functions of the Governor of Paris had fallen so completely into desuetude that it was necessary to make out a fresh patent for him ; but orders were given to all concerned to obey the Governor only, and he was to act by the advice of Marshal Boufflers. So the Marshal, while ostensibly acting only as a sort of aide-de-camp to the Duke de Tresmes, was in reality omnipotent. He behaved in this situation with a modesty which conferred fresh honour on him, and did nothing to weaken the authority of the Governor.

Careful arrangements were made for a more plentiful distribution of food, and Paris was filled with patrols. Perhaps, indeed, there were too many of them ; but, at any rate, they had the effect of preventing any more noise and disturbance. The reputation of Boufflers, enhanced by his simple modesty, was then at its height ; he was practically Governor of Paris, arbiter of all military affairs, and consulted on all matters which concerned the Court. But this brilliant position was not of long duration ; we shall see that it was brought to a close by means of an affair

¹ Some blood was shed, perhaps in a different part of the town. The soldiers, after standing patiently under showers of stones, fired on the mob, and killed two men and a woman. The women were as savage as the men, bringing up stones in their market-baskets for the men to throw.

which might have been expected to make it more solid and durable.

In Spain Besons, perplexed by the numerous orders and counter-orders about the withdrawal of our troops, let slip a splendid opportunity of attacking the Archduke while his army was in the act of passing the Segre. He was much blamed by our Court ; but he was morally timid, and, the last orders he had received being very precise, he dared not take the risk of being defeated while disobeying them. Philip V then took the command of his army in person, but nothing of importance occurred. Besons made arrangements for the disposal of the twenty-six battalions which were to remain in Spain, and recrossed the Pyrenees with the remainder of his forces. So ended the last campaign in Spain in which French troops took part, for the remainder were withdrawn before the next campaign opened. The withdrawal of our troops was ruinous to Spain, and of very little profit to France ; it was the natural fruit of the kind of Government we had endured for several years, which would have brought France altogether to destruction but for a miracle which occurred in a foreign country.

Flanders, from the very beginning of the campaign, was the real centre of interest. The Duke of Marlborough and Prince Eugène were again the joint-commanders of the enemy's forces ; and, from the prodigious quantities of provisions of all sorts which they had collected, they appeared to be meditating a siege. Must I confess that our weakness made us hope that it would be so ? and that the best we expected from our army in the field was, that it would escape defeat ? We had some trifling successes, however ; Artagnan surprised and captured Warneton, with a garrison of 1,600 men ; and Villars had a slight advantage in a foraging skirmish. But the storm soon burst upon Tournai, where the enemy broke ground on the night of the 7th of July. Villars was so short of money and provisions that he could make no attempt to relieve the place, which surrendered on the 28th. The citadel held out till the 7th of September. A better defence had been expected of Surville, the commandant, who had so recently shared in the memorable defence of Lille, and had been in disgrace till he obtained the opportunity of distinguishing himself through the generous efforts of Marshal Boufflers. To the general surprise, his reception by the King on his return was by no

means unfavourable ; but his want of discretion brought upon him the punishment which he deserved for his slack defence. He had dined several times with Prince Eugène and Marlborough ; the conversation had turned on Marshal Villars ; and it was said that Surville, either excited by wine, or angry because no attempt had been made to relieve Tournai, had spoken very freely about the Marshal. He tried to smooth the matter over ; but he had to do with a man who was touchy about his dignity, and never forgave.

Besides this matter about Villars it was rumoured that the hostile Generals had talked to Surville about the rupture of the peace negotiations ; and assured him that they would never have thought of making a proposal so unnatural and unbecoming as that the King should take an active part in depriving his grandson of his throne, if they had not been encouraged to do so by one of his principal Ministers. Chamillart, they said, had written to the Duke of Marlborough to the effect that if the deposition of the King of Spain was the only obstacle, peace was assured ; and that, in saying so, he had no fear of being disavowed by the King. This report caused a great sensation, and the enemies of the unfortunate ex-Minister made great capital out of it. I asked him later on whether there was any foundation for it. He assured me that, for a long time before his dismissal, he had not interfered in any way with the negotiations for peace ; and that the story of the letter was utterly false and absurd. Nevertheless, there were very unpleasant murmurs against him. As for Surville, he was ruined beyond hope of recovery ; he buried himself at his place in Picardy, very badly off financially, and was hardly seen afterwards.

Beauvau, the Bishop of Tournai, who had been translated from Bayonne, distinguished himself during the siege, and contributed all the money he had, and more, towards the expenses of the defence ; he even went so far as to offer to Surville the church plate. Unlike the Bishop of Fréjus, he flatly refused to sing a *Te Deum* for the enemy's triumph, or to take a new oath of allegiance, and left Tournai early on the day when it was to be sung. The King gave him a most favourable reception, and afterwards made him Archbishop of Toulouse. It is remarkable that, in all matters bearing on religion, he received much more considerate treatment from the Duke of Marlborough than from Prince Eugène.

Some surprise was felt that the enemy should have preferred making this great siege to invading France through the districts adjoining the sea. It is true that at the opening of the campaign Villars had taken up a strong position to stop them ; but he could not have prevented them from turning his flanks, or forcing an engagement when they chose. Some people, more intent on saying things that would please the King than on correct reasoning, would have it that the Dutch were anxious for peace, and that they had opposed the project for an invasion, preferring to spend the summer in enterprises which would procure solid advantages for themselves, without inflicting a deadly wound on France ; with the intention of renewing the negotiations in the autumn. This was the notion which the Government tried to instil into the public mind ; for its main object was always to keep people's tongues quiet, either by force or by deceiving them. The King often spoke angrily about praters, as he called them ; and it was a serious offence for any one, in conversing about public affairs, to go beyond the insipidity of the *Gazette de France*.

Towards the end of the siege of Tournai, Boufflers, alarmed at the perilous state of affairs in Flanders, went to the King and pointed out that in all probability a great battle was imminent ; and that if Villars happened to be incapacitated by wounds or illness the army would be in a very dangerous position, during the delay which must inevitably occur before his successor could be appointed. He offered to go as his second in command, obeying his orders, and not interfering with his plans in any way, but simply holding himself ready to take over the command in case of emergency. To understand the magnanimity of this offer, which was worthy of a Roman during the most virtuous period of the Republic, it is necessary to bear in mind Boufflers' position at this time. Though his illness had prevented him from taking command of the army in the field, he was at the height of his reputation, and had attained to every kind of honour which could be bestowed upon him. He was a Marshal of France, a Duke and Peer, a Knight of the Order and of the Golden Fleece ; he was on the most intimate and confidential footing with the King and Madame de Maintenon ; Monseigneur and the Duke of Burgundy were friendly to him ; and every one about the Court, not excluding the bastards, had to treat his wishes with deference

and consideration. He had everything to lose, nothing to gain, by leaving this situation of well-earned reputation and repose ; yet for his country's sake he volunteered to serve under a man ten years his junior as a Marshal of France ; whom he knew to be jealous, selfish, and unprincipled, always ready to claim the credit of other persons' actions, and to throw on them the discredit of his own failures.

The King, after some hesitation, accepted Boufflers' offer, and, to the great astonishment of the army and Court, he made his appearance at headquarters a day or two after the surrender of the citadel of Tournai. Villars received him cordially, provided him with horses and servants, and explained his plans to him. What his real sentiments may have been at seeing himself suddenly provided with so illustrious a second-in-command ; whether he felt it as a restraint and an annoyance, or whether, in the extremely critical situation of affairs, he welcomed it as a relief, remains a mystery. However that may be, to all outward appearance the two Marshals were on the very best of terms. Boufflers, with great tact, refrained from any interference with Villars' arrangements, and was most careful not to assume the airs of a critic or censor ; and Villars treated him with all possible respect.

After the capture of Tournai the enemy marched in the direction of Mons. Villars called in all his detached corps ; and the King of England, who was serving as a volunteer under the title of Chevalier de St. Georges, hastened to headquarters. He had been suffering from a violent fever, and had not completely recovered ; but at such a perilous crisis he disregarded his bodily weakness. The garrison of Mons was weak, and the place was badly provided.

I must here interrupt my relation of the campaign in Flanders to mention an important event, which brought that on the Rhine to a close early in the season. Up to the middle of August this campaign was quite uneventful ; but a bold design, encouraged, if not conceived, in Lorraine, was growing ripe for execution, which threatened ruin to France from the most unsuspected quarter. Madame de Lislebonne had a fine property in Franche-Comté. Her bailiff and other officials, with the assistance of the parish priests, entered into a conspiracy which extended itself

throughout the province, comprising many leading men of different classes, and some members of the Parliament of Besançon. Arrangements were made by the conspirators to massacre the garrison of that and some other towns, and cause a general revolt throughout the province in favour of the Emperor. With the assistance of Madame de Lislebonne's people, constant communication was kept up between the conspirators and the Imperialist army, by means of small boats which crossed the Rhine.

The conspiracy was betrayed by a wig-maker, whose grandfather had rendered good service to the French at the time of the second conquest of Franche-Comté. He warned Le Guerchois, the Intendant of Besançon, who was a great friend of mine, as we have already seen ; and from him I learnt full particulars. Le Guerchois told the wig-maker to continue his association with the conspirators, in order to obtain more information ; which he did very cleverly. He became so intimate with Madame de Lislebonne's bailiff and the priest of the parish in which he lived that they introduced him to all the leaders of the conspiracy, and enabled him to have an interview with an Imperialist General on the other side of the Rhine. He found out that the enemy intended to send a large force into Franche-Comté immediately, to take advantage of the disaffection of the province. Thereupon Le Guerchois thought no more time was to be lost ; he contrived to send despatches to the King and the Duke d'Harcourt, without any one being aware of it, and quietly took all precautions in Besançon.

At this juncture it became known that a strong detachment of the Imperialist army was marching up the right bank of the Rhine to join another corps coming from Hungary, under the command of Mercy. Harcourt at this time was occupying the lines of Lauterbourg, having left du Bourg in command of a detached corps in Upper Alsace. Hearing that Mercy had crossed the Rhine, he sent reinforcements to du Bourg, with orders to attack the enemy at all hazards. Du Bourg did so with complete success ; the Imperialists, though superior in numbers, were routed with great slaughter ; all their guns and equipages were captured ; and among them Mercy's carriage, with the box containing his private papers. Mercy himself succeeded in escaping to Bâle ; immediately after his arrival there he sent a flag of truce to inquire what had become of a certain officer of

Lorraine who was serving in his army ; and to request that, if he had been taken prisoner, he might be released on parole. Du Bourg thoughtlessly acceded to the request, and let the officer go ; next morning he received a letter from Le Guerchois congratulating him on his victory, and giving strict injunctions to guard this officer most carefully if he was a prisoner. It was too late ; the officer was already in safety ; but enough was discovered in Mercy's papers to make du Bourg regret his indiscreet generosity.

These papers did not throw much fresh light on the conspiracy itself, though the whole plan was described with great detail, only the names of persons implicated being concealed ; they were chiefly important because they showed that there were further mysteries which were never cleared up. No positive proof of the Duke of Lorraine's complicity was discovered ; but there could be no doubt that he knew all about the plot, and gave it all the assistance in his power. Madame de Lislebonne's bailiff made his escape, as did the priest of her principal parish, and many of her tenants ; their guilt was fully proved, and they were condemned to death. A few who were rash enough to return, to find out the position of affairs, were caught and hanged ; but the chief culprits remained unpunished. No one dared hint at the real authors of the conspiracy ; and, for fear of offending the Parliament of Besançon, even its guilty members were left undisturbed. Such was the result of this dangerous plot, which was only discovered on the eve of its execution. It was another specimen of the intrigues which the House of Lorraine has never ceased to carry on against France and her Kings, from the time of Francis I to the very end of the reign of Louis XIV, by which that family show their eternal regret for the failure of the great enterprise of the League, when they hoped to exterminate the House of Bourbon and seize the Crown for themselves. This sentiment was so ingrained in their nature that it occasionally betrayed itself even in the least enterprising members of the family, and those most loaded with benefits by our King ; witness the anecdote I have related about the Grand Equerry.

Among Mercy's papers was found a memoir drawn up by Prince Eugène, which contained some mysterious passages. After stating the necessity for reducing France to a condition in which she would no longer be able to trouble the

peace of Europe, the writer went on to say that, if it should be found impossible to effect this by force of arms, recourse must be had to the last and most efficacious remedy. This, and other things which were kept secret, gave the King and his Ministers a good deal to think about ; and they appeared to regret the publicity already given to these papers. Attempts were made to hush up the discoveries ; but I hardly know why. The great remedy hinted at is one which has been familiar to the House of Austria in all ages¹ ; it was exemplified in the fate of Monsieur's daughter, the Queen of Spain ; and of the Electoral Prince of Bavaria, nominated by the Partition Treaty as heir to the Spanish monarchy.

To return to Flanders. After the loss of Tournai, Villars took up a strong position at Malplaquet ; Marlborough and Prince Eugène, fearing lest he might interpose between their army and Mons, which they intended to besiege, marched towards him, sending the Hereditary Prince of Hesse, with a strong detachment, to observe his movements until the arrival of their main body. The Prince of Hesse carried out his orders with great skill, concealing his small numbers, and skirmishing as if about to attack ; but it was thought that Villars lost a great opportunity of crushing him before assistance could reach him. Marlborough, hearing of his perilous situation, advanced by forced marches, and effected a junction with him on the morning of the 10th of September. The day was spent by the hostile Generals in reconnoitring our position, in which they employed a ruse which succeeded perfectly. A few officers, apparently of no high rank, but probably well selected, approached our entrenchments and entered into conversation with the outposts. They told our officers that General Cadogan was not far off, and would be glad to speak to one of our Generals. The Marquis de Charost, who was there, declined, and sent word to the officers to withdraw ; but at this moment Albergotti came up, and showed himself less punctilious. He allowed Cadogan to advance up to a certain point, where he met him, each accompanied by a few officers. Cadogan, after many compliments, began talking about the prospects of peace ; Albergotti replied that he was sorry Villars was not there, as he would have been glad to discuss the subject ; and he thought the

¹ Poison.

preliminaries would not be very difficult to arrange. This served as a pretext for a long conversation, during which the group of officers gradually became larger. The rumour that terms of peace were being discussed spread rapidly through our lines, and came to the ears of Villars, who was much displeased at a conference of this sort being held without his orders, and sent word to Albergotti to put an end to it. The enemy's officers, however, lingered so long that some cannon-shots had to be fired over them before they would retire. During this ridiculous colloquy some of them had been busy examining our position and taking sketches of different parts of our entrenchments ; and next day they profited only too well by the knowledge thus acquired. We heard of this artifice, after the battle, from some prisoners of war.

The night was quiet, and the morning of the 11th broke with a dense fog, which lasted till about six o'clock. It was with great difficulty that Marlborough and Eugène had brought the Dutch deputies to consent to an attack ; they wished to take no risks, and to advance slowly but surely, by means of successive sieges. It was not till the previous evening that their scruples were finally overcome ; but in the meantime Marlborough and Eugène had arranged everything in readiness for an attack at daybreak. Our position was in the form of a crescent, the centre drawn back ; and both flanks slightly advanced, which made it much easier for the enemy to turn and surround them. Both flanks rested on woods, and there was another wood in the centre ; the spaces between these woods left two wide openings, which were well entrenched, and protected by artillery. In front of our centre was another small wood, which was not occupied by our troops ; this wood prevented the enemy from observing the movements of our centre ; but it had this disadvantage, that the enemy could bring up troops unperceived within a very short distance of our lines, and make a sudden attack on our centre. Villars, thinking his left the most vulnerable point, established himself there ; while Marshal Boufflers took command of the right wing.

By seven o'clock the fog had disappeared ; the enemy's columns were seen advancing, and both our flanks were soon subjected to a heavy infantry attack ; the most serious being on our extreme left. The enemy calculated that Villars would be obliged to draw troops from his centre to

reinforce his wings ; and it was, indeed, that which caused the misfortunes of the day. The attack on our left was extremely heavy ; the enemy, after a first repulse, came on with such vigour that our troops began to give way ; and Villars was forced to send for nearly all the infantry from the centre, leaving only Charost's brigade and the French and Swiss Guards. In the meantime the enemy had filled the little wood in front of our centre with infantry, which now advanced to the attack. Charost was killed almost at once, and it was said that the troops did not hold their ground as well as they might ; however that may be, they gave way before superior numbers, and the centre was pierced. On the left, notwithstanding some disorder, the battle was still raging ; and the enemy's advance was costing them dear, when Villars unfortunately received a severe wound in the knee ; Albergotti was also wounded and forced to leave the ground ; and Chemerault was killed. The defeat of our left wing then became complete, in spite of the efforts of the King of England.

On our right there had been a very sharp action ; all the attacks of the enemy had been repulsed, and Marshal Boufflers was preparing to push his success and complete the victory, as he thought, when the news of Villars' wound and the disasters to our centre and left wing reached him. Overcome with grief, he put himself at the head of his cavalry and made several desperate charges, his object being to reinforce the centre, which had not yet completely given way. But the enemy kept on bringing fresh troops against him, and in the meantime had taken possession of our last entrenchments in the centre. It was at this crisis that the behaviour of the Guards and the King's regiment was said to have been bad ; they gave way, and let the enemy carry the position with a rush. They then brought up their cavalry, which was quite fresh, while ours had lost heavily, having been exposed for six hours to the fire of artillery. Our cavalry waited too long before they charged, and then did not charge home, but turned and broke ; it was the *Gendarmerie*. A few minutes later the Musketeers and the red squadrons of the King's household came up, and charged the enemy vigorously, driving them back in their turn ; but they soon rallied, and as they were continually reinforced our troops had to give way in the end, and abandon the battle-field. This was the last real combat

of that fatal day ; our left had already retreated under the command of d'Artagnan, who showed such a firm front, and retired so steadily, that the enemy did not press his retreat. Boufflers also drew off the remains of his army in good order, and was not molested in his retirement.

The enemy bivouacked on the battle-field that night, amongst 25,000 corpses, and next day marched towards Mons. They admitted freely that their losses far exceeded ours ; they had twelve Generals killed and wounded, and more than 15,000 men.¹ They expressed surprise at the courage which most of our troops had displayed, and admitted that they would have been beaten if our army had been better arranged. Our loss was 10,000 killed and wounded ; we had three Generals killed—Chemerault, Pallavicin, and Charost. Courcillon, Dangeau's only son, of whom I have spoken elsewhere, lost a leg ; and the Prince de Lambesc, only son of the Count de Brionne, the Grand Equerry's eldest son, was taken prisoner ; but immediately released on parole. Both armies were convinced that the battle was lost before Marshal Villars was wounded, though he did his best to make out that his wound was the sole cause of our defeat. It was the universal opinion that Marshal Boufflers would have gained a victory if our left had not given way and forced Villars to weaken his centre. The spirit of our troops was not cast down by their defeat ; they were eager to fight again, and Boufflers was very anxious to make the enemy raise the siege of Mons, which they began on the 23rd of September. But when it came to the point he had to acknowledge that the enterprise was impossible. Our army had neither money nor provisions ; officers and men were often reduced to feeding on grass and roots ; and the Marshal could do no more than withdraw his troops to a district where he could feed them till the time should arrive for going into winter-quarters.

Immediately after the battle Boufflers sent a despatch to the King ; it was clear, concise, modest, and full of the praises of Villars, who was unable to write himself. Next

¹ The loss of the Allies was even greater than Saint-Simon supposes ; it was not far short of 20,000 men killed and wounded. It was caused chiefly by a premature attack on the French right by the Prince of Orange, which was repulsed with serious loss. The attack on the French left was mainly carried out by British troops, who suffered heavily. The French had about 12,000 men killed and wounded.

day he sent another, in which his admiration for the behaviour of the troops carried him rather too far ; for he was so bent on consoling the King that any one would have imagined that he was announcing a victory, and looked forward to a series of conquests. Nangis, whom I have often mentioned, had served in the battle as *maréchal-de-camp*. Villars liked him and had pushed him on in the service ; relying on him as a friend, he chose him to go to the King with a verbal report of the battle ; for he knew how important it was to send a trusty man, with influential friends at Court. Nangis was as dull-witted as a man can be who has lived at Court and in the best society from childhood ; but he had sense enough to see that, in spite of the good understanding between the two Marshals, it was not wise to interpose between them. He therefore went to Boufflers, and tried to get out of his commission ; but the fact that he had been specially chosen by Villars was enough for Boufflers, who insisted on his going, and entrusted him with another letter for the King.

All the odium attaching to a bearer of evil tidings had fallen on the officer who brought the first despatch ; moreover, we were unfortunately so accustomed to hear of our armies being completely routed that a defeat such as this seemed almost a victory ; the appearance of the charming and fortunate Nangis on the horizon therefore restored serenity to the Court. Considering how many ladies there were in the Court, how much they chattered and what power they had usurped, it may readily be supposed that his presence did a good deal towards making our misfortune seem more tolerable. His report was clear and concise ; he was careful to speak only of what he had seen himself, and so evaded many embarrassing questions ; in this way he fulfilled his commission without giving offence to any one. He praised Villars highly, and made the most of the consequences of his wound ; that was what he was sent to do, and his testimony was borne out by the letter from Marshal Boufflers, which surpassed his former despatch in enthusiastic praise of Villars and the behaviour of the troops, and in expressions of his flattering hopes for the future. This letter was published, and it seemed so absurdly exaggerated that it did much harm to Marshal Boufflers. D'Antin, an intimate friend of Villars, used all his sarcastic wit to discredit Boufflers in the King's opinion ;

and the public was so much annoyed by this bombastic letter that the defence of Lille, and the generous feelings which had led Boufflers to Villars' assistance, were almost forgotten.

The lucky Villars, who had continued to grow rich on active service, in which most people are ruined ; who had been made a Marshal of France for a battle gained by others, when he himself had given it up as lost ; who had been given the Order simply because the King took it into his head to give it to all Marshals of France ; Villars, I say, was now made a Peer for the battle of Malplaquet, a defeat due in a great measure to his own bad tactics. It cannot have been very pleasant for him to hear the remarks of the public on the suitability of such a reward for a man of his birth. Harcourt was furious ; though absent on the Rhine he managed to make his complaints audible to the King and Madame de Maintenon, and was at once created a Peer himself ; but he had the mortification of coming after Villars, so greatly inferior to him in birth and all other qualifications ; and moreover, considerably his junior as a verified Duke.

Artagnan received the Marshal's bâton at the same time. Public opinion was not favourable to his promotion, either in the Court or the Army ; it was considered a degradation of the highest military grade, just as Villars' peerage was of the highest dignity in the kingdom. This sentiment was so loudly expressed that it even produced an effect on the King ; he stopped short, and no other honours were given for this lost battle, in which so many men of all ranks had distinguished themselves.

Artagnan's father was the King's Lieutenant at Bayonne ; he obtained a commission in the regiment of Guards commanded by Marshal de Grammont, Governor of Bayonne and Navarre. He was for a long time Major in this regiment, and it was in that capacity that he attracted the King's notice. He was first cousin to the Artagnan who died in 1724, being at that time Captain of the first company of Musketeers and a Knight of the Order. Their grandfather's sister had married M. de Castelmoré, whose family name was Baatz, and had two sons by him. The younger son preferred the name of Artagnan to his own, and was known by it all his life ; he became Captain of the Musketeers, was highly esteemed both at Court and as a soldier, and gained

the King's favour to such a degree that he would have gone far if he had not been killed before Maestricht in 1673.¹ The King always liked the name of d'Artagnan for the sake of this Captain of Musketeers ; and in memory of him he made the d'Artagnan who died in 1724 quit his rank of Captain in the Guards to become Sub-Lieutenant of the Grey Musketeers, which he afterwards commanded in succession to Maupertuis.

To return to the new Marshal ; he made his way at Court by intrigues ; he used to supply the King with a good deal of information in an underhand way, and made great friends of nearly all the confidential valets. He also gained the favour of Madame de Maintenon and M. du Maine ; so that his superiors in the Army had to treat him with a certain amount of respect. He became Director of Infantry, and in this position contrived to amuse the King by suggesting alterations in uniforms and accoutrements, new forms of drill, and so on—proposals which helped on his advancement, but did not make him popular in the service. At Court he was not much liked, and led rather an obscure life. Nevertheless, he was a good and capable officer, but not a man to live with on a confidential footing.

When he was made a Marshal of France he took the name of Marshal de Montesquiou, the family name of his house. Thereupon M. le Duc became furious ; used the most violent and insulting language about him ; said he was very insolent to take the name of a traitor who had assassinated his ancestor ; and gave out that he would insult the Marshal publicly the first time he met him. Antoine de Montesquiou, Lieutenant in the gendarmes of the Duke of Anjou, who afterwards became Henry III, in 1569 stabbed the Prince of Condé, the Huguenot leader, from behind, as he was sitting with a broken leg under a tree, having just been taken prisoner. The Montesquioues always assert that among the archives of their house they possess a written order from the Duke of Anjou for putting the Prince of Condé to death. However that may be, it was none the less a disgraceful crime ; but this Prince of Condé was M. le Duc's ancestor five degrees removed, and the Montesquiou who killed him was cousin to the Marshal's great grandfather ; so it was rather a far-fetched quarrel. M. le Duc's object was to make people afraid of him, but he need not

¹ This was our old friend, the hero of "The Three Musketeers."

have taken so much trouble about it ; the savage temper which he showed every day was quite enough to keep them at a distance. The Marshal took no notice of him or his exaggerated notions of the privileges of a Prince of the Blood ; he kept the name of Montesquiou, merely remarking that he was not in the habit of submitting to insults, no matter who offered them ; and that speeches, which he could not believe to have been really made, should not hinder him from presenting himself wherever he chose, under the name which had always been borne by his family. This firm declaration sent M. le Duc into indescribable transports of fury ; but the Marshal paid no attention ; when he returned to Paris after the campaign he went everywhere quite freely, as he had said he would. He did not come across M. le Duc ; that Prince had had time to reconsider the matter, or possibly he had received a hint to do so from a greater personage than himself. During the winter M. le Duc died, and no other Prince of the House of Condé took up this quarrel, with respect to which people took the liberty of laughing at him, undeterred by the fear of his vengeance.

The siege of Mons was still in progress, and from want of supplies the King's army was unable to interrupt it ; Boufflers had to give all his attention to feeding his own troops, a task which became more difficult every day. He could not help a certain feeling of resentment at seeing Villars elevated to the rank of his equal for having lost an important battle, after letting slip the chance of beating the enemy in detail, while he himself had saved his country by extricating the army from the consequences of Villars' blunders. Villars, on his side, thought less of his wound, which was doing well, than of the extraordinary favour shown him by the King ; who sent Maréchal, his own surgeon, to him, with orders to remain by his side till he was able to travel. He determined to make the most of the brilliant position in which he found himself so unexpectedly. All his emissaries found fault with Boufflers, who, with his usual magnanimity, took no notice of Villars' trivial censures. After a time, however, he began to perceive that Villars was acting of set purpose, and it made him angry ; but he restrained himself, and made no outward difference in his behaviour.

Boufflers was always precise and over-careful about

trifles ; this caused him to lose much time in making out the list of officers to be recommended for promotion after the battle ; he was always promising to send it, but failed to do so for more than a fortnight after the action. He was much surprised, on the evening of the very day his courier had left, to receive a list of appointments from Voysin, in which all vacancies were filled up and promotions settled, without his having received the slightest warning that the King would do so before receiving his own list of recommendations. The slight was the more painful because it was known to the whole army, and there had been no previous instance of a General in command being treated with such want of consideration. There were several causes which led to the fall of Boufflers. Both Voysin and Villars were anxious to get rid of him ; Voysin, because the King had imposed upon him the humiliating condition of doing nothing important in his own Department of War without first consulting Boufflers ; Villars, as an inconvenient rival at the head of the army. Moreover, Boufflers shared the fate which, in all countries and in all ages, has befallen those who render services without looking for reward : he fell a victim to envy. Men can put up with the spectacle of heroic actions, because every one flatters himself that he is capable of doing the same in similar circumstances ; for this reason the glory of M. le Prince and M. de Turenne could be tolerated ; moreover, it was considered that their services were merely a set-off against their former efforts to ruin the State, and that they were sufficiently rewarded with laurels. But when a man, already loaded with every possible mark of favour, renders additional services out of pure magnanimity, his disinterested action becomes a crime in the eyes of his Sovereign ; for their inability to bestow an adequate reward touches the pride of Kings on the tenderest spot. So it was with Boufflers ; but it must be confessed that there was another cause which contributed towards his downfall.

It is certain that annoyance at seeing Villars and Harcourt raised to the Peerage, and placed on a level with himself under such circumstances, turned the Marshal's head, and caused him to ask for a reward ; though at the time when he went to Flanders he would have spurned such an idea with indignation. He thought he might claim the office of Constable of France. There was no Marshal of France or

Prince of the Blood whose claims could compare with his own, and he flattered himself that the objection to making a subject too great and powerful, which had caused the office of Constable to fall into desuetude for the last thirty years, would not apply to him, after the proofs he had given of his loyalty and unselfishness. Whether he asked for this mark of favour immediately after the battle, or whether he put it off till his return to Paris, is more than I can say ; but that he did ask for it, and I believe more than once, is absolutely certain ; and this put the finishing touch to his downfall.

After Mons had surrendered the enemy broke up their army ; Boufflers did the same, and returned to Court. His reception was colder than that of an ordinary General after an uneventful campaign ; he had no private audience of the King, not even a passing word on the subject of Flanders ; the King, indeed, hardly spoke to him, and seemed rather to avoid him. Madame de Maintenon did her best to console him ; so did the Duke of Burgundy, and even Monseigneur ; but it was in vain. Too virtuous to reflect that the King was old, and that he might look forward to better times after his death, he could not get over his altered manner and his refusal to give him a reward which he thought he had merited. He had the courage to continue his ordinary life at Court, making no change in his outward demeanour ; but there was a dagger in his heart, and no lapse of time could blunt its point. He often spoke to me freely about his disappointments, without any unworthy weakness. Though never confined to his bed, nor even to his room, his health grew feeble, and he did not survive his return two years.

Villars returned in triumph ; the King insisted on his living at Versailles, so that Maréchal might attend to his wound, and lent him the fine apartments of the Prince of Conti, because his own quarters were small and situated quite at the top of the *château* ; so that it would have been difficult to carry him up to them. What a contrast between the services and the situation of these two men, and what an inexhaustible subject for reflection !

The Elector of Bavaria had been desirous for a long time to pay his respects to the King personally, but had hitherto been refused permission. The King disliked ceremonious receptions, and it was a constraint to him to be obliged to do the honours of his Court, though when it was unavoid-

able he performed the task with much grace and dignity. Perhaps, also, he felt that a tacit reproach to himself would be involved in the presence of a Prince who had lost his dominions by his fidelity to France, and to whom even the allowance which the King was obliged to give him was, by reason of our misfortunes, very irregularly paid. The Elector, however, was so persistent, declaring that he would be content to travel incognito, with no more public honours than had been accorded to his brother, the Elector of Cologne, that it was impossible to refuse any longer. He arrived at Paris accordingly, under an assumed name, and after a stay of three or four days was conducted by d'Antin to Marly, where the King was. He had a private interview with the King which lasted for an hour and a half, after which the King led him into the saloon, where all the ladies were assembled in full dress, and a great table of lansquenet had been set up. The King presented the Elector under his assumed name to Monseigneur, the Duke and Duchess of Burgundy, and the ladies, saying that he was a friend who had come to pay him a visit, to whom he wished to show his house. He then retired, leaving the Princes to entertain the Elector, who appeared cheerful and polite, talking freely and asking questions; but bearing himself with an air of conscious dignity by no means unbecoming to a Prince in misfortune.

After a time the King returned, and took the Elector for a drive in a small carriage drawn by four men. The Elector conversed easily and familiarly with the courtiers who walked on each side, yet with an air of great respect for the King; he praised the gardens extremely. After this he returned to Paris. Two days afterwards he was taken over the *château* and gardens at Versailles by d'Antin, by the King's orders. Monseigneur wished to ask him to dine at Meudon; but a difficulty arose: to everybody's surprise he claimed the distinction of the "right hand." Such a pretension was as absurd as it was novel; no Elector had ever dreamt of taking precedence of the heir to the Crown, and moreover this one was travelling incognito. He had been allowed to come only on condition that he would follow the example of his brother, and give no trouble of that sort; nevertheless, there were negotiations, which terminated in a most absurd compromise. He went to Meudon, but did not enter the house; Monseigneur received him out of

doors ; a carriage was in readiness, into which they got simultaneously from opposite sides ; they went for a long drive, and the Elector then returned to Paris, things being arranged so that Monseigneur did not actually see him either enter or leave the carriage. In this way his claim to have the right hand was evaded, although Monseigneur did sit on the right in the carriage.

Among the pretensions of the Elector of Bavaria I must not omit to notice a remarkable change in the manner of speaking of him adopted by Monasterol, his Envoy, and all the members of his little Court. Up to that time they had always spoken of him, according to the invariable custom of our language, as " M. l'Electeur " ; for it is only the Pope, the Emperor, and Kings, who are spoken of simply by their titles. However, they dropped the " Monsieur " ; this gangrene soon spread to the French Court ; " M. l'Electeur " became an old-fashioned, obsolete way of speaking, and now people talk of the Elector of Bavaria, the Elector of Saxony, and so on ; as who should say " the King of England," or " the King of Sweden." So it is that customs change, and all distinctions are reduced to the same level ; the result is chaos. It would be easy to show that, as regards his recognised and undoubted precedence over all other sovereigns, our King, even at the height of his prosperity, was a very little King indeed as compared with his predecessors ; even with such Kings as Philip of Valois, John, Charles V, and Charles VI, whom I pick out because it was during their reigns that our monarchy was reduced to the lowest pitch of humiliation.

The Bishop of Chartres died about this time ; not old, but worn out by study and hard work. His name was Godet ; he was of humble birth, though his family had made some honourable connections by marriage. He was one of the first students turned out by St. Sulpice, which has since become a sort of nursery for rearing Bishops ; and he was perhaps the one who did it most honour. He was a truly virtuous and upright man, a profound theologian, capable and learned, without pedantry ; and, though he never courted society, he knew how to conduct himself in it like a man of the world. His talents and the growing influence of his seminary, which was strongly opposed to Jansenism, brought him into notice. He was appointed to the see of Chartres after the death of Marshal Villeroy's uncle ; and

had already made his mark as a great and conscientious Bishop when Madame de Maintenon founded the establishment of St. Cyr in his diocese. This brought him into close relations with her ; she liked him so much that he became, not only the Superior and immediate director of St. Cyr, but her own spiritual director, and the adviser to whom she opened all her heart. She brought him under the King's notice as much as she could, to counteract the influence of Father de la Chaise and the Jesuits, whom she disliked, in the distribution of benefices. He became the confidant of their marriage, and used to speak and write about it to the King quite freely, often congratulating him on the possession of so accomplished a wife. I never saw these letters myself ; but his nephew and successor had copies of them, and often told me about them, years after the deaths of the persons concerned.

Having attained this high degree of favour he of course became a personage. The clergy were prostrate before him, and the Ministers had to consult his good pleasure ; it was a bad day for the Chancellor de Pontchartrain when he ventured to oppose him, although entirely in the right, as I have related elsewhere ; he lost favour which he never afterwards recovered. Yet, powerful as the Bishop was, there never was a man more simple and unassuming in his demeanour. He hardly ever went to Paris, though business often brought him to St. Cyr ; when he did go to town he lived in a little room at St. Sulpice, on the same footing as the rest of the inmates. He never slept at Versailles, and seldom appeared there in public ; he used to see the King in Madame de Maintenon's room, going in by the back way ; he never went to Fontainebleau, and very rarely to Marly—only when some urgent business took him there, and then he stayed no longer than he could help. He was most assiduous in his episcopal work ; he knew all his clergy, and everything that went on in his diocese, and governed it with tact, wisdom, and much gentle charity. His domestic expenditure was frugal in the extreme, and all that he saved out of his revenues went to the poor. He used to spend a good deal on printing his doctrinal works ; his frequent journeys were also expensive ; and, as he never had time to look after his worldly affairs, he found himself in difficulties. He told the King frankly how he stood, and asked him for an abbey. After some delay, the King told him that, on

consideration, he thought that to accept an abbey would injure his reputation ; he preferred to give him a pension of 20,000 livres, which would be more useful, and could be paid without letting the world know about it. It was paid accordingly up to the time of his death. This little anecdote shows how dear he was to the King and Madame de Maintenon.

With all his excellent qualities, he did a good deal to ruin the clergy of France ; and much of the evil which has since flowed from that poisoned spring may be traced to him. Being of low birth himself, he was naturally prejudiced against persons who were better born ; and he had imbibed from St. Sulpice a blind hatred of Jansenism. Though he knew the Jesuits thoroughly, and disliked them, he was as suspicious and as blindly zealous as they were where Jansenism was concerned ; it is true that they were actuated by ambition and self-interest, while he did everything from the very best motives ; but the effect was the same. I have spoken elsewhere of the wound he inflicted on the Episcopate by recommending the appointment of hot-headed and ignorant men of low birth—an abuse which was intensified later on through the influence of Father Tellier, and has become worse than ever under the reign of Cardinal Fleury.

When he became conscious of his growing infirmities he resolved to take a coadjutor, to assist him in ruling his diocese. He chose his great-nephew, the Abbé de Merinville ; but family affection had nothing to do with the selection. The Abbé, however, was only twenty-six years old, and could not be consecrated till he had completed his twenty-seventh year ; the Bishop did not live to consecrate him in person, but he had the satisfaction of seeing that he had not been mistaken in his choice. When he was on his death-bed his nephew came to him and implored him to nominate some one else as his successor, for he dreaded the responsibility of the sole charge of such a diocese. The Bishop made no reply, but remained for some time in meditation ; at last he said that, having asked God for guidance, he felt sure that he was doing right, and that it was His will that he should be Bishop of Chartres. The Bishop died very soon afterwards, and the coadjutor begged Madame de Maintenon not to ask for him to be appointed : but his remonstrances were not heeded, and he was nominated, in spite of his youth. As soon as he had completed

his twenty-seventh year he was consecrated. It would seem that God's blessing was on his appointment : he has become one of the wisest and most saintly Bishops in France ; he sets an example which causes virtue to be respected, and knows how to punish offenders, though always with mildness and discrimination. He has also a way of making the Court tremble by his outspoken freedom of speech. He has not the tact and knowledge of the world which his uncle possessed ; but, nevertheless, with all the outward dirt and coarseness of a seminarist, he brings ability and discretion to the government of his diocese, lives frugally, gives liberally to the poor, and never accepts anything for himself.

Madame de Maintenon chose as her new spiritual director La Chétardie, the parish priest of St. Sulpice, a very saintly priest, but the stupidest and most ignorant of men. To any one who knew him it is almost inconceivable that Madame de Maintenon should have confided her most secret thoughts to him as freely as she was accustomed to do to the Bishop of Chartres ; such is the fact, however. In a very short time she was perpetually writing to ask his advice, and spoke to him freely about public affairs. The worthy man, not content with the care of his vast parish, was Superior of the Convent of Ste Marie de Chaillot ; and, extraordinary as it may seem, he used sometimes to carry Madame de Maintenon's letters with him when he visited the convent, and read them aloud at the grating, even when some of the young nuns were present. One of Madame de Saint-Simon's sisters was a nun there, and she was sometimes stupefied with astonishment at the secrets which she heard, in company with other nuns. In this way many things leaked out in the most unaccountable manner ; but Madame de Maintenon never found out how they had transpired, nor did she ever lose her fancy for this worthy priest during the few remaining years of his life.

Marivaux, a Lieutenant-General, died about this time. His family name was de Lisle ; he came of a very ancient and distinguished house, which had held the *seigneurie* of Lisle, near Pontoise, since the year 1069. He was a very good-looking man, clever and well-informed, with a witty tongue, on which he put little constraint ; and people were afraid of him accordingly. He took a fancy to me when I was in the army, and I got on very well with him ; nobody was better company. The Secretaries of State for War

and their subordinates were not fond of him, and he never had much regard for their feelings. He was once nearly drowned by the upsetting of a ferry-boat ; the accident was a good deal talked about, and the King asked him how he had escaped ; for the fact was that he was unable to climb up the steep banks, and some people who were there seemed in no hurry to assist him. He told the King that, seeing it was useless to appeal to their better feelings, he had the happy inspiration to call out that he was a nephew of the Intendant ; and thereupon had been rescued immediately. He then proceeded to make some remarks about the influence of Intendants in general, which amused the bystanders immensely, but did not please the King by any means, and were not of much assistance to him in obtaining promotion.

M. de Luxembourg lost his wife during his stay at Rouen. I have mentioned her before. Her misconduct was so notorious that her husband was the only person ignorant of it, for she always contrived to make him believe that she was the best and most devoted of wives. His grief at her death was pitiable and really ridiculous, considering the scandalous life she had led. He had a secretary named Abeille, a man of honour and virtue, who had served the late Marshal de Luxembourg in the same capacity ; he could not bear to see his master exposing himself to public derision in this manner, and told him all that, up to that time, he had himself taken the greatest trouble to conceal. The poor widower was very unpleasantly surprised, and rapidly consoled.

CHAPTER XVII

1709

Destruction of Port-Royal-des-Champs—Explanation of Jansenism—The Bull “*Vineam Domini Sabaoth*”—The nuns of Port-Royal refuse to sign adhesion to it—Harsh conduct of Father Tellier—The nuns appeal to Rome, and receive a favourable answer—The abbey nevertheless destroyed on another pretext—Visit of Chamillart to La Ferté—A tactless sermon—My return to Paris—I stay at Pontchartrain on the way—The Chancellor urges me not to quit Court—His generous kindness—I determine to seek an audience of the King—Maréchal undertakes to arrange it—The King visits Marshal Villars—Melancholy situation of the Duke of Orleans—I resolve to induce him to separate from his mistress—I consult Marshal Besons, who promises to help—My mother and wife try to dissuade me—My arrangement with Besons—Maréchal induces the King to see me.

THE autumn of 1709 witnessed the final destruction of the famous monastery of Port-Royal-des-Champs. It had long been the object of the vindictive hatred of the Jesuits ; in the end it became their victim. Without going at any great length into the history of the disputes between the Molinists and the Jansenists, I find it necessary to give a brief abstract ; for some knowledge of the question is indispensable for a proper understanding of many of the events of this period.

The mystery of the grace of God, as far beyond our limited comprehension as the doctrine of the Trinity itself, has always been a stumbling-block to the Church ; for the teaching of St. Augustine on the subject had scarcely been promulgated when it met with opponents among the priests of Marseilles. His doctrine, however, was supported by St. Thomas and other enlightened personages, and has been formally adopted by the Church in its General Councils ; more especially by the Popes and the Church of Rome. But, notwithstanding these decisions, and the condemnation by the same Councils of the Pelagian and semi-Pelagian heresies, the opposite doctrine has always found a certain number of

adherents in the Church ; though, not daring to profess it openly, they have veiled it under various disguises, like the semi-Arians of old.

In these last days the Jesuits, who have taken possession of the confessional of nearly every Catholic Sovereign, and have almost monopolised the education of youth ; who have made themselves popular by their laxity in the administration of the sacrament of penance ; who, moreover, are really to be admired for the hardness of their lives, dedicated as they are to study, and for the piety of their earlier fathers, and whose consistent policy and perfect organisation render them truly formidable,—the Jesuits, I say, after having subjugated the Italian schools of theology, and done their best to weaken those on this side of the Alps, ventured to propound doctrines on the subject of grace quite opposed to those of St. Augustine, St. Thomas, and the General Councils. These were contained in a book written by their Father Molina. The Church of Rome was more than once on the point of anathematising them, but always drew back at the last moment. The Church of France was specially forward in denouncing these alluring novelties ; many were nevertheless led astray by them, from pride in human reason, and the easy way of salvation which they seemed to open.

The Jesuits, embarrassed by the difficulty of defending their opinions, determined to carry the war into the enemy's country. They professed to have discovered a new heresy, which, however, had neither founder nor disciples ; and declared that it was contained in a book written by Cornelius Jansenius, Bishop of Ypres, who had been held in veneration, and died in the bosom of the Church. By this clever trick they constituted themselves accusers, and put their opponents on the defensive. Hence arose the names of Molinists and Jansenists, by which the two parties were afterwards known. There were long and serious discussions at Rome over this new heresy ; discovered, or rather invented, by the Jesuits to embarrass the adversaries of Molina. A Congregation, known as the " *De Auxiliis*," was held for the express purpose of inquiring into it, and assembled frequently under Clement VIII and Paul V. The latter Pope actually drew up a decree anathematising the doctrines of Molina, but he dared not publish it ; he contented himself with expressing his disapproval, and did his best to console the

Jesuits by supporting them against the imaginary heresy which they turned to such good account.

Many pious and learned persons had found a retreat in the Abbey of Port-Royal-des-Champs. Some of them spent their time in writing, others in the education of youth. Many works on the principles and practice of religion were published there, the excellence of which is universally admitted. The Jesuits had long been jealous of the school of Port-Royal; and this jealousy became irreconcilable hatred when they saw its inmates take part against them in the disputes about Molinism. Hence arose the persecution of the Jansenists, of M. Arnauld, who was considered as their chief, and of the Sorbonne, and the dispersal of the solitaries of Port-Royal. From this cause also sprang the introduction of a form of abjuration by which the newly discovered heresy was not only condemned, but declared to be contained in a book called "*Augustinus*," written by Jansenius, Bishop of Ypres. The Jesuits proposed that all religious persons should be required to swear adhesion to every proposition laid down in the formula. There was no difficulty about the principle; that is, that five opinions stated in the formula were heretical, for no one thought of denying it; the difficulty arose about the matter of fact, namely, that these five heretical opinions were maintained in Jansenius' book. The Jesuits were quite unable to quote passages asserting them in so many words; the most they could do was to declare that these heretical opinions were a logical deduction from the general tendency of the book. This proposal aroused strong opposition. To call upon the nuns throughout the kingdom to swear adhesion to the formula was asking them to swear that certain opinions were maintained in a book which they had never read; which, indeed, they could not read, because it was written in Latin. Moreover, to any scrupulous person it seemed monstrous to be ordered to swear adhesion to a statement which had never been proved; and which, as a matter of fact, he did not believe to be true. The result was that the provinces were filled with persons exiled for refusing to swear, and the monasteries and prisons with captives.

The Court lent all its weight to the side of the Jesuits; for the League and its consequences were an old story, and the Jesuits had contrived to make the King believe that the Jansenists were a sect of Independents, as hostile to his own

authority as they were to that of the Pope—or, as the Jesuits preferred to call it, the Church. The distinction between the principle and the matter of fact, which had been tolerated for a time, was now forbidden, as a revolt against the Church. Yet not only had the Church given no decision on Jansenius' book, but she has never exacted implicit belief in facts asserted by General Councils, even those most generally recognised as Œcumenical. Many statements of fact so asserted are still warmly disputed, without any fear of the Church's displeasure.

But the influence of the Jesuits was all-powerful; the King's confessor had the disposal of all ecclesiastical benefices; and the position of a Bishop was far from pleasant if he had incurred the displeasure of the Jesuits, and consequently of the Court. The persecution became more and more bitter, till many recusants were punished by being deprived of the Sacraments, and even threatened with death. These excesses aroused the indignation of some of the Bishops, and they wrote to the Pope to remonstrate. By doing so they exposed themselves to deprivation of their functions; indeed, steps were being taken with that object, when a more considerable body of their colleagues came to the rescue and united with them. Then the Court of Rome began to fear a schism. Other Bishops offered themselves as mediators; among them Cardinal d'Estrées, at that time Duke-Bishop of Laon. These negotiations led to the truce of Clement IX, as it was called. The Pope declared that the Holy See had never construed the formula to mean that the five heretical propositions were contained, explicitly or implicitly, in Jansenius' writings; all it required of the persons signing it was that they should condemn these opinions as heretical, in whatever book they might be found. This compromise had the effect of restoring liberty and the Sacraments to those who had been deprived of them; and many Doctors and other ecclesiastics were reinstated in their offices.

The Jesuits and their allies were furious; the more so, because the Jansenists, while freely condemning the five heretical propositions, had not desisted from their attacks on the doctrines of Molina. The famous Pascal not only denounced these doctrines, and showed by quotations from Jesuit casuists to what excesses they must lead, but held up the Jesuits to ridicule in the witty papers known as the

“Letters to a Provincial.” After this came the dispute between the Jesuits and the other missionaries in India and China about certain ceremonies ; in which the Jesuits allowed their converts to take part, alleging that they were of a merely political character, whereas the others declared them to be idolatrous. The Court of Rome decided against the Jesuits, and a book which Father Tellier had written in their defence was placed upon the Index ; he himself had to leave Rome, and had some difficulty in averting more serious consequences. This dispute added fresh rancour to the quarrel between Molinists and Jansenists, which grew hotter and hotter ; and the Jesuits seemed to be getting the worst of it.

Father Tellier of course engaged in it more warmly than any one. As I have already said, he was an enthusiast, who carried his zeal for Molinism, and for the influence of his Society, to the verge of idolatry. He had an easy game to play. The King was very ignorant of these matters ; such knowledge as he possessed was entirely derived from the Jesuits, and he had allowed himself to be persuaded by them that the Jansenists were hostile to his absolute authority. Moreover, he was uneasy about his own salvation ; and, as he knew nothing of the spirit of true religion, he always imagined that he might atone for his own sins at the expense of other people. He was delighted when he had the opportunity of doing a sort of vicarious penance by inflicting suffering on Huguenots or Jansenists ; for in his opinion there was little difference between them, and they were almost equally heretical. He was surrounded by people as ignorant and prejudiced as himself, such as Madame de Maintenon, and the Dukes de Chevreuse and de Beauvilliers, who had been led astray by St. Sulpice and the Bishop of Chartres.

The status of the French clergy had long been deteriorating, and this was another thing which greatly assisted Father Tellier’s designs. Through the influence of the Bishop of Chartres the episcopate had been stuffed with men of low birth who looked upon the Pope as a divinity ; who held the ancient maxims of the Church of France in horror, because they knew nothing of history ; and who, being persons of no standing or position, could not comprehend what was meant by “the State.” Father Tellier had nothing to fear from the Parliament of Paris ; all the spirit

of resistance had long been crushed out of it, and the few members whose position was sufficiently independent to enable them to speak their minds were either devoted to the Jesuits, like the First-President Pelletier, or hungering for court favour.

Still, there were a few persons whose opposition the Jesuits could not afford to despise, such as Cardinals d'Estrées, Janson, and Noailles, and the Chancellor. But Estrées was an old man, and a courtier; so was Janson, besides that his health was much broken; and the Chancellor had very little influence left, as Father Tellier well knew; so they were not very formidable. Cardinal de Noailles, however, was in a different position; he was very intimate with Madame de Maintenon, in favour with the King, and held in great respect in his diocese, as well as by the clergy throughout the kingdom. He was particularly obnoxious to the Jesuits, not only because he differed from them in doctrine, but because he had been appointed to Châlons, and afterwards to Paris and the Cardinalate, without their participation and against their wishes. The Jansenists, however, were not very fond of him, because he did not agree with all their opinions, and would not let them domineer over him; moreover, his discovery of the real author of the famous pamphlet, "A Problem," had naturally not tended to make him better pleased with them. Father Tellier had therefore two objects in view: the first, to destroy the Cardinal's influence by contriving to put him on bad terms with the King and with the Jansenists; and, secondly, to complete the work at which the Jesuits had been labouring for so many years by the final abolition of Port-Royal-des-Champs.

Since the truce of Clement IX had enabled the nuns to return to that abbey, Father de la Chaise had contented himself with preventing them from receiving novices; so that the establishment might gradually die out without violence. We have seen that, after Maréchal's visit to the abbey, the King admitted to him that he considered the nuns to be really holy women, and that he was sorry he had allowed strong measures to be taken against them. It did not take the new confessor very long to alter these opinions. Three or four years before this, the Molinists, who were always trying to disturb the truce of Clement IX, had induced the Pope to issue a Bull or Constitution known as

Vineam Domini Sabaoth, directed against Jansenism. It was not by any means what the Jesuits wanted ; for the Court of Rome, though always willing to oblige the champions of Ultramontane pretensions, was reluctant to disturb the truce of Clement IX, and had purposely drawn up this Bull in ambiguous terms, so that it might be accepted by everybody. It was only issued because, in the heat of controversy, certain Jansenists had gone so far as to uphold some or all of the five heretical propositions ; they had done so very secretly, but the fact was revealed in the papers seized in the Abbey of St. Thierry, a matter to which I have formerly referred in connection with the Archbishop of Reims. The great majority of the Jansenists entirely disavowed these hot-headed partisans, and renewed their adhesion to the condemnation of the five propositions, declaring plainly that they considered them heretical. For want of a better weapon, however, Father Tellier fell back on this Bull, hoping to turn it to good account against the inmates of Port-Royal, the most sensitive of all the Jansenists ; and also to embarrass Cardinal de Noailles.

The King ordered the Cardinal to make the nuns of Port-Royal sign a declaration of obedience to the Bull, and, as it contained nothing really contrary to the truce of Clement IX, he could not refuse ; he thought it advisable, however, to begin by obtaining the signatures of the more amenable communities, in hopes that their example would have its influence on the more obstinate. He succeeded completely up to a certain point, for even Gif signed. It is a convent of nuns situated five or six leagues from Versailles, which has been always regarded as the younger sister of Port-Royal-des-Champs ; and the two communities had always been on terms of the greatest intimacy and confidence. Armed with this signature, Cardinal de Noailles thought he would have no difficulty in overcoming the scruples of the nuns of Port-Royal. He was mistaken ; these women, who had been so cruelly used, who were spied upon unceasingly in their solitude, whom no one could approach without risking exile or imprisonment, and who, consequently, had no one to whom they could turn for advice, could not be induced to sign any more declarations. They were not to be moved even by the example of Gif. The Cardinal exhorted them in vain, explaining that they were not asked to do anything contrary to the truce of Clement IX,

or to the doctrines which they held dear. Nothing could reassure these timid, pious souls ; they feared a trap, and their resolution was not to be shaken by any consideration of its probable consequences. That was exactly what the Jesuits had been hoping for ; they had forced Cardinal de Noailles to commit himself, and they now saw their way clear to the destruction of this detested community. Their dread had always been that some of the nuns might survive the King, and that their own influence with his successor might not be powerful enough to prevent them from receiving novices. They looked forward with terror to seeing this house, the centre and rallying-point of the Jansenist party, revive and flourish once more under a new reign.

Cardinal de Noailles went several times to Port-Royal, to remonstrate in person with the nuns ; but with no success. In the end he was forced to give way to the pressure of the King and his confessor ; he proceeded to extremities, and deprived Port-Royal of the Sacraments. Then Father Tellier spared no pains to blacken the nuns in the eyes of the King ; he represented them as a set of rebellious women, who stood out against the rest of the Church, and were opposed to all authority, regal or papal ; he told him he ought to have destroyed Port-Royal years ago, and his conscience would give him no peace till he had done so ; in short, he worked upon the King's mind till the destruction of the abbey was finally decided on. But, to the astonishment of everybody, the nuns took formal and regular measures to defend themselves : they appealed to Rome, and their appeal was favourably received. The Bull *Vineam Domini Sabaoth* had never been intended to weaken the effect of the truce of Clement IX, and the refusal of the nuns to sign it without an express declaration that it was without prejudice to that truce seemed not unreasonable ; in short, their conduct, which in France was deemed criminal and deserving the most severe penalties, appeared quite innocent at Rome. They were willing to submit to the Bull in the spirit in which it had been issued, and that was all the Holy See required of them.

The Jesuits then changed their plan of attack. Port-Royal of Paris was an offshoot of Port-Royal-des-Champs ; during several years the inmates of the latter had been removed to Paris, and the buildings at the Champs had been used for farm purposes. Afterwards, during the

persecutions, the nuns had been divided ; those who were willing to do all that was required of them were left at Port-Royal of Paris ; the more refractory were sent back to the Champs, and after this they had no more bitter enemies than the inmates of Port-Royal of Paris. Nearly all the property of the community was adjudged to the Paris house in hopes of reducing Port-Royal-des-Champs by famine ; but, by dint of hard work and economy, and the assistance of alms, the nuns there managed to maintain themselves. The Jesuits now propounded the argument that there was in reality only one community of Port-Royal ; that it had been divided temporarily on sufferance only ; and that it was not advisable to keep up both branches. Of the two, however, they said Port-Royal of Paris was the only one worth keeping up ; the other was situated in an unhealthy locality, without sufficient means of support, and inhabited only by a few obstinate old women, who had been forbidden for many years past to receive any recruits for their community.

The Jesuits carried their point. By virtue of a decree of the Council, the Abbey of Port-Royal-des-Champs was surrounded by a detachment of Guards on the night of the 28th of October ; and next morning d'Argenson arrived there with a squadron of archers. He assembled the inmates, showed them a *lettre de cachet*, and, giving them only a quarter of an hour to make their preparations, carried them off in several carriages which he had in readiness. Each carriage was escorted by mounted men ; and the nuns were thus taken away like women of the town after a raid on a house of ill-fame. They were distributed among various convents, some of which were at a distance of fifty leagues from Port-Royal. The persecutions which they subsequently underwent to obtain their unqualified assent to the Bull became known, in spite of the vigilance of their oppressors, and aroused public indignation to such a degree that the Court, and even the Jesuits themselves, were alarmed. Father Tellier, however, was not a man to be satisfied with half-measures. To complete the story, the end of which really belongs to the opening months of 1710, all families having relations buried at Port-Royal-des-Champs received notice to remove the bodies for burial elsewhere ; all those not so removed were exhumed and thrown most indecently into the cemetery of a neighbouring

parish. The abbey buildings, including the church, were then razed to the foundations, as is done with the houses of Kings' assassins ; so that not one stone was left upon another. The materials were sold, and the site was then ploughed over and sown—not with salt, it is true, but that was the only favour which the abbey received. Even the Court of Rome was shocked at the enormity of such proceedings. I make no comment on them, preferring to confine myself to a simple narrative of the facts.

As I have already mentioned, Chamillart purchased the property of Courcelles. When he had settled into his new house I went to pay him a visit there. My friends did all they could to dissuade me ; and indeed it was not a very prudent thing to do, but I thought I ought not to make my friendship for him subservient to considerations for my own safety. I remained there three weeks, spending the morning of each day with Chamillart, who talked to me very freely of public affairs during his administration, and told me many curious things ; especially with regard to Madame de Maintenon, and the consequences of her whims and changing moods. The remainder of the day was spent in walks and other amusements ; Chamillart seemed calm and in good spirits, but it was evident that he dreaded being left to himself. The neighbours called upon him frequently, and he made them welcome ; and his family did all they could to amuse him and distract his thoughts.

Two incidents occurred during my visit which I cannot refrain from recording. The fine college of La Flèche is only two leagues from Courcelles ; we went to see it, and the Jesuits did their best to give us a good reception. The widow of the *seigneur* of La Flèche lived close by ; Chamillart thought it would be only civil to call upon her. I thought it right to warn him that she was Tessé's daughter, because that Marshal had spoken very strongly against him towards the end of his administration, and contributed as far as he could to his overthrow ; however, Chamillart said that did not matter, and we went. We were shown into an antechamber, where we remained for nearly a quarter of an hour ; it contained a large old-fashioned chimney-piece, on which were inscribed these Latin verses :

Donec eris felix, multos numerabis amicos ;

Tempora si fuerint nubila, solus eris.¹

¹ So long as you are fortunate, you will have many friends ;
If the times become stormy, you will find yourself alone.

I pretended not to notice them ; but, as we were kept waiting some time, Chamillart employed his leisure by examining everything, and I saw him reading them. I looked another way, so that he might not perceive that I had seen them, and also to avoid any discussion about the moral which they conveyed. The other adventure was more disagreeable. The parish church of Courcelles is at some distance, and the road to it is very bad. We went there on All Saints' Day to hear Mass ; but we thought we would attend Vespers at a convent only a mile and a half away, called Fontaine-St.-Martin. We saw the Abbess at the grating, and the ladies went inside. Chamillart and I thought we would shirk the sermon, which would probably be a very bad one ; but the Abbess told us that the Bishop of Mans, hearing that we were likely to attend the service there, had asked the Jesuits to send one of their best preachers, and he would be disappointed if we went away without hearing him ; so we had to stop. I trembled as soon as I heard the opening sentences of the sermon. The preacher took for his subject the contrast between the most complete happiness which this world can give and the perfect beatitude of the saints ; he dilated on the instability of all earthly fortune, the danger of trusting to it, and our unavailing regret when it has passed away. If he had confined himself to generalities it would have been all very well, and the subject might have been considered appropriate to the day ; but he went on to describe Chamillart's position in such unmistakable terms that every one in the congregation felt uncomfortable. He spoke of the happiness conferred by the favour and confidence of a great Sovereign, and the administration of public affairs ; of the mistakes which a man may commit in such a position ; he then dilated on his wretchedness when he has lost it, the loss of friends, and the calumnies which he has to bear in silence. He said that a King confers a priceless favour on a fallen Minister if he allows him to retire without calling him rigorously to account for the errors of his administration ; and, finally, he wound up his discourse by exhorting any one who found himself in this unhappy situation to turn it to good account, so as to attain greater and everlasting felicity in heaven.

If he had addressed Chamillart by name it could not have been more evident that the sermon was intended for him

alone ; for there was no one else present whom it could possibly concern. Chamillart was the only person in the congregation who appeared unembarrassed. When Vespers were over we returned to the grating ; Chamillart praised the preacher, and greeted him cordially when he came out, thanking him for his sermon ; fortunately some refreshments were announced immediately, and gave us something else to talk about. We then returned to Courcelles, and could say what we thought of the bad taste displayed by the Jesuit, who seemed rather to plume himself on his performance. A few days after this I went back to La Ferté, after an absence of about a month.

Our guests had all taken their departure by the time I returned to La Ferté, and Madame de Saint-Simon and I were at leisure to discuss our future movements. I was still of opinion that my best course would be to leave the Court altogether. I had fallen into disgrace with the King, through no fault of my own ; yet there was nothing tangible in the insinuations so cleverly made to blacken me in his estimation, nothing which I could refute, no accusation against which I could even attempt to justify myself. How could I defend myself against such charges as that I was too clever, and knew too much, or that I had too many influential friends in high places ? One circumstance alone was quite sufficient to throw light on the motives of my accusers : they never cast up against me my intimacy with the Duke of Orleans, though I made no attempt to conceal it, and though he had incurred the King's most bitter displeasure ; the fact is, they were not afraid of anything coming of this intimacy, whereas they did not know what some of my other friendships might lead me to. My bet about the siege of Lille was a matter which they brought up to make the King believe that I was an enemy to his Government, and always ready to find fault with it. This was another accusation against which it was not easy to defend myself ; for, though Vendôme had fallen into disgrace, how could I demonstrate to the King the existence of a plot against his grandson when so many of the conspirators still enjoyed his favour, and some of them were so nearly connected with himself ? I came to the conclusion, therefore, that the evil was beyond the reach of any remedy, for there was nothing tangible for me to lay hold of ; I did not feel disposed to remain at Court if I was to be exposed to con-

tinual mortifications ; I had never cared to practise mean servility, even when there was something to be gained by it ; I certainly did not feel more inclined to do so when it was obvious that I should be simply wasting my time. Madame de Saint-Simon, though she unselfishly put her own wishes entirely on one side, remonstrated gently with me ; she spoke of the dulness of an unoccupied life in the country, for books could never compensate me for the society and active interchange of thought which I should have to give up ; she reminded me that a connection with the Court was almost necessary, to enable me to retain my paternal estates ; and that without it I should find it difficult to introduce my sons into society and into the service ; she suggested, finally, that in the natural course of events changes must occur which would materially alter my prospects.

I made up my mind, however, to spend the four winter months at Paris, and the remainder of the year at La Ferté, without going near the Court except when absolutely necessary ; but leaving Madame de Saint-Simon free to divide her time between it and the country. Just at this time we heard of the sudden death of our man of business, who for more than thirty years had managed our affairs with the greatest skill and devotion to ourselves. This made it necessary for me to hasten my return to Paris ; and Madame de Saint-Simon suggested that we should stay for a day or two at Pontchartrain. She had previously told the Chancellor about our discussions, and arranged with him that this visit should take place while the Court was at Marly, and he was sure to be at home.

I fell unsuspectingly into the trap, and on the 19th of December we arrived at Pontchartrain. Next morning the Chancellor took me into his private room, both our wives being present, and, having made sure that we should not be interrupted, he asked me how my affairs stood, and whether I had thought better of my decision to leave the Court. I gave him my reasons for doing so ; he heard me out, and then proceeded to argue the point from the other side. With the utmost tact and kindness he found fault with some parts of my conduct ; he showed me that if certain persons were my enemies I had given them good reason for being so ; and that, considering the unsparing way in which I usually spoke of them, I could not blame

them if they took precautions to prevent me from reaching a situation where I should have it in my power to injure them. Though it was true, he said, that I spoke little, when I did I expressed myself with such energy that I frightened people ; and my silence, when I said nothing, was often more eloquent than words. He repeated Madame de Saint-Simon's arguments, putting them even more forcibly than she had done ; and wound up by quoting many instances of persons who had passed through even worse positions than mine, and yet were now in the enjoyment of the King's highest favour.

His wife took part in the discussion, which lasted a long time ; I omit the flattering things they said about my capabilities and the leading part which I might reasonably hope to play, which their attachment for me led them to exaggerate greatly. Finally, they said that the greatest inconvenience I should have to suffer would be the necessity of living in the town of Versailles, for which I could not blame the King ; for I had never applied for any of the vacant apartments in the *château*, relying on being able to keep those of the Duke de Lorge ; and it was nobody's fault if I found myself accidentally deprived of them through his father-in-law's downfall. To remedy this inconvenience, they offered me such accommodation as they could, namely, a fine large room with a dressing-room, forming part of their suite of apartments, which had been their brother's room ; but he was now suffering from the effects of an apoplectic fit, and never left his house at Paris. They said, if I did not care to sleep there, I could use it during the day-time, to receive my friends ; and Madame de Saint-Simon would have a place to change her dress. Madame de Saint-Simon took no part in all this conversation, which lasted nearly three hours. The Chancellor wound up by begging me to say nothing then, but to think the matter over ; and they would wait and see the result of my reflections.

Next day they took advantage of the absence of Madame de Saint-Simon to attack me again, on the ground of consideration for her, representing to me the melancholy life to which I was condemning her, and reminding me how much she could do to assist me at Court, where she was liked and esteemed by everybody, including the King. It was true that the Duchess of Burgundy had more than once complained of her long absence, in a most kind and

friendly manner, to Madame de Lausun. The Duke of Orleans had also spoken to Madame de Lausun very feelingly about my retirement, sending me an offer through her to let me have the rooms in the *château* allotted to d'Effiat as his chief equerry ; for d'Effiat hardly ever used them. But I had not the slightest acquaintance with d'Effiat, and did not care to put myself in a false position with him by accepting the offer. These conversations touched me by the real kindness which they revealed, but my resolution remained unshaken ; they only threw me into a state of perplexity which made me uncomfortable and unhappy.

I stayed two days at Pontchartrain ; during my visit I asked the Chancellor how matters stood with the Duke of Orleans. He told me that nothing could be more distressing ; the King showed his displeasure in the most marked way, and Monseigneur still more so ; he was shunned by everybody, and spent more of his time than ever at Paris, in the company of Madame d'Argenton and his debauched associates. Quite lately he had given a dinner to the Elector of Bavaria at St. Cloud, at which the lady had done the honours, and the King had been extremely angry about it. In short, no Prince of his rank had ever been so completely annihilated. I had expected to hear something of the sort, but this was more than anything I had imagined. It gave me additional food for reflection.

We had to pass by Versailles on our way to Paris, and on the 21st of December, the day of the King's return from Marly, we dined with the Chancellor there. His wife took us to see the rooms which they meant to give us. They had renewed their offer to us in such a way as to make it clear that they would be hurt and offended by a refusal, even going so far as to say they could manage to provide us with something to eat, for ourselves and our friends. It would have been churlish to persist in my refusal, and I accepted their offer of the rooms ; but I drew the line at the food, which I gratefully but resolutely declined. It is impossible to describe the tact and kindness which they showed throughout this affair.

In the evening, when the Court had returned, I found myself surrounded by friends of both sexes, who seemed to have entered into a conspiracy to make me change my mind about retiring, coming one after the other to repeat the old arguments in different ways, as if they had agreed

among themselves not to leave me in peace for a moment. The Duchess of Burgundy sent for Madame de Saint-Simon as soon as she returned, and overwhelmed her with kindness ; she again spoke about her succeeding Madame du Lude ; and Cheverny told me that same evening that the Duke of Burgundy had mentioned the matter to him.

I was surprised at the warmth of my reception, and touched by the constant and disinterested affection shown me by so many friends. I considered the question of my retirement once more ; and resolved, without saying a word to any one, to try a bold experiment, which would settle my doubts once for all ; either by replacing me on my old footing at Court, or by making it quite clear that I had nothing for it but to retire. I determined, if possible, to have an interview with the King, for, difficult as it was to combat such vague prejudices as he had formed against me, I could not forget that this method had stood me in good stead on more than one occasion ; and, if he refused to hear me, or gave me a brief and unsatisfactory audience, my friends would have nothing further to urge against my resolve to leave the Court. I went to Maréchal, whose attachment to me I have mentioned elsewhere ; he was one of those who had tried to prevent me from going away, and he had written to me at La Ferté, urging me strongly to hasten my return. After talking over my embarrassing position, I told him that, if I could speak to the King at my leisure, I thought I might manage to set myself right with him ; the difficulty was that he was so inaccessible. I added that I was about to ask him to do something for me which he must not hesitate to refuse, if it was beyond his power, for I knew I could count on his friendship and good-will ; my request was that, choosing his own time, he should tell the King that I was greatly distressed at finding that I had incurred his displeasure without, so far as I knew, having done anything to deserve it ; that this was the cause of my long absence in the country ; that my mind would not be at ease till I had had an opportunity of speaking to him frankly and fully ; and that I implored him to grant me an audience at his leisure. I told Maréchal that, if my request was refused, I should see clearly that I had no favour to expect ; and if it was granted I should be guided by the result of my interview.

Maréchal reflected for a moment, then, turning to me,

"I will do it," he said warmly ; "and you are right, it is the only thing to do. You have already spoken to him several times, and he was pleased with you ; from his former experience he will, at any rate, not be afraid of your saying things which he would rather not hear. But I cannot answer for his giving you an audience if he is really strongly prejudiced against you ; I will do my best, but you must let me choose my own time." We arranged that he should write to me at Paris by a special messenger as soon as he had spoken to the King. When I left him I went and told the Chancellor and Madame de Saint-Simon what I had done, telling him at the same time that he and my other friends had bullied me into making this last attempt, and that it remained to be seen from the result whether I should remain at Court or abandon it for ever. They were both much pleased ; but the Chancellor feared lest the King, having his mind poisoned against me by a number of artfully conveyed insinuations, should refuse to listen to me. Madame de Saint-Simon feared so too, and with better grounds to go upon ; for she knew from the Duchess of Burgundy, though she had wisely concealed it from me, that the King was really strongly prejudiced against me. They both agreed that there was nothing for it but to wait, and hope for the best ; they would not admit, however, that a refusal must necessarily entail my retirement.

Late that evening I went to call on Madame de Saint-Géran, who was recovering from a severe operation ; she had sent as soon as I arrived at Versailles to ask me to do so. The Maréchale de Villars came in while I was there. Up to the time of Chamillart's downfall we had lived in the rooms adjoining hers, and she had always been most friendly to Madame de Saint-Simon ; she had even taken no notice of my displeasure when her husband was so scandalously made a Duke, of which she was well aware, for I never congratulated them, nor had I written to do so when he was raised to the Peerage. She greeted me as cordially after my four months' absence as if we had never parted, and invited Madame de Saint-Simon and myself to dinner next day in so pressing a manner that it was impossible to refuse. The Villars were then on the very pinnacle of favour ; she knew that the King intended to pay her husband a visit next day, but, as she confessed to me afterwards, she pur-

posely refrained from telling me so, intending to give me an opportunity of paying my respects to him. The Duchess de Villeroy, on whom I called next morning, warned me, however, that the King would be there, fearing lest I should let fall some hasty expression if I was taken by surprise. There were not many people at the dinner ; but it was easy to see that they had been carefully selected, and asked specially to meet us. When dessert was served, guards were posted at the door, and the King came in, on his way back from hearing a sermon, for it was Sunday. He bowed to the company, and, going up to the Marshal's couch, embraced him twice with a few gracious words ; he then asked the company to withdraw, and remained alone with the Marshal for two hours. As he was going out, the Marshal called out to him that he was mistaking the door ; but the King said there was no mistake, he was going to see the Maréchale in her own room. He found her there in the company of a few ladies ; he did not stay long, but behaved with that air of majestic gallantry which came so naturally to him.

This visit caused a good deal of comment ; for though, in former days, it had not been unusual for the Sovereign to visit persons of distinction when they were ill, the King had not done so since he went to see Marshal de Grammont, who died in 1678. As he was on his way to Villars' rooms he said, as if to excuse himself, that, since the Marshal could not come to him, it was evident that he must go to the Marshal. This favour shown to Villars was very painful to Marshal Boufflers ; and it so happened that it was the cause of a snub being administered to another illustrious person in disgrace. The Duke de Vendôme, since his exclusion from Marly and Meudon, seldom came to Versailles ; but he chanced to arrive there while the King was in Villars' apartments. Like a thorough-going courtier, he went and stood with the crowd in the gallery outside, waiting a whole hour and more for the King to come out. The King saw him, and merely asked him at what time he had left Anet. That was all the conversation he had with the King the whole time he was at Versailles, where he stayed till New Year's Day. A good many people were amused to see Vendôme reduced to such a plight.

While I was busy putting the irons in the fire for my own interests I was not unmindful of the melancholy situation

of the Duke of Orleans. We had not met as yet ; for from Marly he had gone straight to Paris, where I never saw him. I was shocked to see him fallen so low ; I saw clearly enough that the only remedy was one which it would be very awkward, and even perilous, to suggest to him ; and which there was little hope of his adopting ; namely, a complete and final separation from his mistress. The more I considered the subject, the more convinced I was that this was his only chance of recovering his proper position ; and, though I was quite aware of the difficulty and danger of the task I was undertaking, I determined to see whether I could not persuade him to give up Madame d'Argenton. But I felt that I should want an ally ; and, though my acquaintance with him was very slight, it occurred to me that Marshal Besons might be able and willing to help me. He was strongly attached to the Duke of Orleans, who put much confidence in him, and had contributed greatly to his elevation.

Besons was a rustic, and his manners were rough ; with no great ability, he had plenty of sense ; and his fine head, like a portrait by Rembrandt or Van Dyck, with bushy eyebrows and a huge wig, made people give him credit for even more sagacity than he really possessed. He was an excellent General, especially of cavalry ; but not so good in chief command, because, with much cool personal courage, he was morally timid, and afraid of responsibility. He was an honest, straightforward man ; austere and virtuous in his judgement of other people, not quite so strict where his own conduct was concerned ; as was natural in a man conscious of his low birth, with a large family to which he was much attached, and which he desired ardently to establish solidly and raise in the social scale. The friendship of the Duke of Orleans had been of great use to him in furthering the interests of his family ; and it must have been painful for him to have to choose between the discredit of abandoning the Prince or the embarrassment of remaining attached to him in the wretched position to which he had fallen. For these reasons I determined to ask Besons to help me.

On the day following the King's visit to Marshal Villars I saw Besons waiting in the great suite of apartments while the King was at Mass. I went up to him, and, drawing him aside without ceremony, I began talking to him about the Duke of Orleans. The Marshal was aware of my intimacy

with him, and spoke quite freely about his position, which he described as even worse than the Chancellor had led me to suppose. He was shunned by everybody to such a degree that his servants told the Marshal that he was the only man who had been inside his door for a month ; and I do not mean the only man of position, but literally the only one. At Marly, if he approached a group it instantly dispersed, to gather again in another part of the saloon. At Meudon it was worse still ; Monseigneur could hardly tolerate his presence, and showed his feelings openly, a very unusual thing for him ; so that people were afraid to be seen with the Duke of Orleans, and would hardly answer if he spoke to them. The Marshal said he was distressed beyond words to see him reduced to such a position ; and all the more because, so far as he could see, there was no remedy for it.

Looking him straight in the face, I said I knew one remedy, and only one ; I was so deeply grieved at what I heard of the Prince's situation that I was determined to see whether he could not be induced to adopt it, for I felt sure that its effect would be prompt and efficacious. I added that it was a delicate and perhaps dangerous subject to meddle with, and I dared not act alone ; I ventured therefore to appeal to him, as the only person capable of giving me aid and counsel. If he was willing to back me up, I proposed that we should go together to the Prince and ask him straight out to give up his connection with Madame d'Argenton, the source of all his errors and misfortunes. If he could be persuaded to do this, I felt satisfied that it would set him right with the King ; who, from his own experience, could make allowances for the force of an ungovernable passion, and would be gratified, not only for his daughter's sake, but also as an uncle ; for he had formerly been really attached to his nephew. If the King could be pacified, I had no doubt that the public, including the other royal personages, would soon change their attitude toward the Duke of Orleans. I ended by saying that if we were to make the attempt there was no time to be lost, for each succeeding day made matters worse. I asked the Marshal to think it over, and see whether he would help me, or whether he could suggest any better plan. He was surprised at the frank way in which I spoke to him, but did not doubt for a moment that my suggestion was the only one

which could save the Duke of Orleans. He promised on the spot to help me, though he saw all the difficulties clearly enough. As we were beginning to discuss the matter in detail we saw d'Antin pass by. The same thought passed through our minds simultaneously ; we looked at each other, and agreed to separate at once, making an appointment to meet at my house at Paris on the afternoon of Christmas Day.

Full of these important thoughts, I went that afternoon to Paris with Madame de Saint-Simon, and confided my design to her and to my mother. They were both terrified, and implored me to give it up. They said the Duke of Orleans would never have moral strength enough to give up his mistress, and he would certainly tell her of our proposal ; she was bold, insolent, and spiteful to the last degree, an intimate friend of the Duchess de Ventadour, the Princess de Rohan, and all that dangerous clique who already hated me ; besides that, there were a number of people who looked upon her as a source of gain and a useful friend, and would revenge themselves by causing a quarrel between the Duke of Orleans and myself. In short, they said this was no business of mine, and a dangerous one to meddle with ; my own affairs were not in such good condition that I need go out of my way to seek for fresh sources of annoyance ; and, without actually abandoning the Duke of Orleans, I should act more wisely if I kept away from him as much as possible, taking advantage of his frequent absences. This advice seemed to me to be very sensible, and I felt strongly inclined to follow it.

Besons was punctual to his appointment on Christmas Day. I saw at once that he was not very keen about our project ; and, as I had cooled down myself, I did not try to stir him up, but talked of the difficulties attending it, and admitted that, on reflection, I was disposed to think more of them. He also doubted the possibility of inducing the Prince to give up Madame d'Argenton ; he did not think the secret could be kept from her, and seemed quite alive to the danger to which we should be exposed from the fury of that woman and her surroundings. We finally agreed to modify our plans, without giving them up altogether. We abandoned the idea of going together for the express purpose of speaking to the Prince about his mistress ; but we settled that if either of us saw an opening

in conversation with him he should avail himself of it ; with power to quote the other's opinion, and even to tell him of our joint determination ; in short, that we should make the most of any chance opportunity, using our discretion. We talked over his affairs at some length, especially his dabbling in sorcery, and the Spanish business, concerning which the Marshal knew no more than I did ; and so we parted, having settled our plan of action so far as was possible.

On the 30th of December, as I was at supper with Madame de Saint-Simon, a message came from Maréchal to say that he had spoken to the King, and had not been unfavourably received ; that I should have my audience, but it was very advisable that I should see him first. This message gave us great pleasure ; we felt that it was a great thing to be sure of an audience, and we must hope that it would be neither cut short nor unduly postponed. Next day, the last of the year, we returned to Versailles, and I went at once to see Maréchal. He told me that, finding the King in a good humour, he had remained behind after he was in bed, and asked him first of all for some trifling favour to himself, which the King granted in a very gracious way. He then went on to tell him that he had something else to ask, which was much nearer his heart ; and the King having asked, very pleasantly, what it was, he replied that I was greatly distressed to think that I had incurred his displeasure ; and took the opportunity of speaking highly of my loyal attachment to his person. The King, though apparently not angry, became stiffer in his manner ; and replied that he had nothing against me, and did not know why I should think so ; whereupon Maréchal begged him to give me an audience, as a thing I most earnestly desired and as a great favour to himself. " But what can he have to say to me ? " said the King ; " there is nothing to talk about ; it is true that some trifling things against him have come to my ears, but nothing particular. Tell him to set his mind at ease, and that I am not angry with him." Maréchal, however, returned to the charge, and pressed the King to grant an audience, till at last he said, with an air of indifference : " Very well, I do not mind ; whenever he pleases." Maréchal assured me that, though the King did not seem to like me, he saw no signs of his being angry ; and he hoped I should have a quiet and uninterrupted hearing. He ad-

vised me to say what I had to say at full length, and not cut it short for fear of taking up too much of the King's time ; to speak openly and freely ; and to mingle a sort of loyal affection with the deference due to him. In the meantime he thought it advisable that I should take every occasion of showing myself in the King's presence, so as to give him ample opportunities to choose his time for speaking to me.

I thanked Maréchal most warmly for the service he had rendered me ; its importance may be estimated by the fact that I had not another friend in the world, Minister, *seigneur* or person of distinction, who could have done the same : a very surprising thing to say, but literally true ; and it shows how suspicious the King was of everybody except his personal attendants. Maréchal bound me to complete secrecy, except so far as Madame de Saint-Simon and the Chancellor were concerned ; and I kept my promise faithfully. He was not afraid of people knowing that I had had an audience of the King, for that was of course a thing which could not possibly be concealed ; but he did not want it to be known that he had obtained it for me. So ended the year 1709.

CHAPTER XVIII

1710

I visit the Duke of Orleans on New Year's Day—We discuss his situation—

I broach the subject of a separation from Madame d'Argenton—His reception of my overtures—I quote Besons' opinion, and he consents to see him—The Chancellor approves my design—Supper with the Duchess de Villeroy—Besons accompanies me next day to the Duke of Orleans—Long expostulations with the Duke—I am forced to tell him of the terrible calumnies against him—He confides to us his suspicions of his wife's fidelity—I am able to disprove the stories against her—The interview broken off, and resumed after dinner—Interrupted by the arrival of Mademoiselle—I find fresh arguments derived from her prospects—He seems less disposed to listen to us—I have to speak very plainly and forcibly—At last he consents to see Madame de Maintenon—Next morning he tells me the result—He suspects me of having made an arrangement with her beforehand—My denial—I confide the secret of my approaching audience to him and Besons—His kind remarks—He sees the King, and is unfavourably received—The King's dislike for surprises—The Duke's arrangement in favour of Madame d'Argenton—I resolve to keep secret my share in the separation.

THE events of the first four days of the year 1710 deserve a sort of diary ; not only on account of the part I played in them, but because they gave rise to a series of important consequences. On New Year's Day the Duke of Orleans returned to Versailles for the ceremonial visits customary on that day. I saw him after the King's Vespers ; he took me at once into his innermost private room, where we began talking at first in the disjointed way usual when people meet after a long separation. I then asked how he was getting on with the King, Monseigneur, and the rest of the Royal Family : to which he replied vaguely : " Not badly ; not particularly well." I said that was not enough ; whereupon he told me that he had lately given an entertainment at St. Cloud to the Elector of Bavaria, at which many ladies had been present, including Madame d'Arco, the mother of the Chevalier of Bavaria ; and he had thought there would be no harm in asking Madame d'Argenton ;

that the King had nevertheless been displeased, and had told him so after sulking a few days ; since then, he said, everything had gone on as usual. I asked him what he meant by this expression "as usual," for after an absence of four months it conveyed nothing to me. On this, he began talking in a vague sort of way, as if unwilling to go into particulars ; I pressed him for an answer, and, as he perceived that I knew something, he asked me what I had been told. I said I had heard on very good authority that his relations with the King were very bad indeed ; so bad that they could hardly be worse ; that Monseigneur was even more angry with him, and showed it openly ; and that, taking its cue from them, society in general shunned him ; in short, his position had been described to me in a manner which distressed me beyond measure. After a few moments of silence he admitted that it was all true ; adding that it all arose out of the Spanish affair, which had been harmless enough in itself, but the part he had played in it had been magnified and distorted by rascals for the sake of making mischief ; the misfortune was, he added, that he could do nothing, but he supposed everything would come right in time. I looked at him steadily, and replied that, though some things might gradually pass out of memory, the lapse of time only deepened the impression left by others ; and his experience would tell him that this Spanish business was one of these, for he could see for himself that he stood worse with the King and Monseigneur to-day than when the affair first became known. He admitted that it was so ; he said they were stiff with him, and he was embarrassed with them ; in short, there was a mutual constraint about their relations which was very unpleasant, and made him keep away as much as possible. He went on to complain, with some asperity, of the manner in which he was cut by society. I told him that, under such a despotism as we were subject to in this reign, the eyes of the Court were naturally fixed on the King as its guiding star, ready to perceive the smallest indication of his wishes or feelings ; in most cases, I said, the motive was merely servile flattery, but in this Spanish business it was sheer terror, for which I thought there was some justification. Hard as his isolation was to bear, I added, he could not reasonably take offence at it ; he could only hope that the King's feelings towards him might change, in which case he would no doubt see a

corresponding alteration in the demeanour of Monseigneur and society in general.

This outspoken reply threw the Prince into a state of consternation which aroused my pity, and nevertheless encouraged me. When I entered his room I had no intention of breaking the ice ; I meant only to feel my way, throwing out hints which he could understand if he chose. Now I laid aside all fear, and resolved to disregard the prudential considerations which had occurred to me ; I determined to speak to him about the vital question, if an opportunity presented itself naturally, as I foresaw it would ; and in a few minutes it did present itself. The Duke of Orleans, distressed by my picture of his situation, and unable to disguise from himself that it was true, got up after a few moments of silence, and began walking up and down the room. I also rose, and stood leaning against the wall, watching him ; suddenly he raised his eyes, and said with a sigh, "Well, but what can I do ?" "What can you do ?" I said in a firm and significant tone, "I know well enough what you might do, and I know it is the only thing to be done ; but I will never tell you what it is !" "Ah ! I know what you mean !" he cried, as if thunderstruck ; and repeating, "I understand you !" he went and threw himself on to a seat at the far end of the room. I felt sure that he really did understand me ; and I turned slightly away from him, to spare him the unpleasantness of being looked at in these first moments of agitation. A long silence ensued ; I heard him moving restlessly in his chair, and I wondered how the conversation would begin again. Hearing him sigh, I judged that his agitation was caused by painful reflections rather than by anger ; and at last I broke the silence, which was becoming oppressive. I said I thought there were not two men in the world so much attached to him as Besons and myself, and the suggestion I had made was the result of an agreement between us ; I then told him the whole story, how we had at first intended to go together to him, and how on reflection we had thought better of it, and arranged that whichever of us found an opening in conversation should take advantage of it, and call in the other to support him. He went on sighing, after hearing this brief recital, but said nothing. I turned away from him, to put him more at his ease ; and from time to time said, as if talking to myself : "It is the only thing to be

done ; the only way out of it," and so on. At last, after a long pause, he came up to me and said, with indescribable bitterness : " What sort of a proposition is this that you are making ? " " I am proposing to restore your own dignity," I said. " I am proposing the only means by which you can regain your proper position, and a better position than you ever occupied before ! " After a few moments I added : " Oh, how I wish Besons was here ! " He did not reply for some time ; and then said, in a tone of studied calmness : " He is here." " What ! " I said, " at Versailles ! " " Yes," he said ; " I think I saw him this morning in the King's room." " Well, sir," I replied, " will you send for him ? " and, after a little pressure, he gave his consent. I went out at once and told his servants that he wished to see Marshal Besons.

While we were waiting for an answer the visit of the Duke of Burgundy was announced. It is the custom for the Sons of France to return the New Year's visits which they have received earlier in the day from Grandsons of France, though they do not return those of the Princes of the Blood. We left the private rooms to receive the visit in the bedchamber ; it did not last a quarter of an hour. The Duke of Orleans was so thoroughly master of himself that I could never have suspected his previous emotion, if I had not witnessed it myself. When the visit was over they went on to the rooms of the Duchess of Orleans for a similar ceremony ; I remained behind, but, seeing the Duchess de Villeroy through the door, I called to her to come and keep me company. She came rather grumpily, saying she was too fond of the Duchess of Orleans to care about sitting in that room ; to which I made some joking reply. As we heard the visit coming to an end she asked me to supper that evening, to meet her husband the Duke de la Rocheguyon, and have a chat. I tried to get out of it, because I was engaged to sup with Pontchartrain ; but she would take no excuse, and refused to leave the room till I had promised to come.

When the Duke of Orleans came back I asked if he had heard anything of Besons ; he told me that he had returned to Paris, and as I looked rather put out he said there would be other opportunities for seeing him. I had a good mind to propose that I should send to Paris for Besons ; but from something in his manner I was afraid he would tell me to do

nothing of the sort, so I determined to say no more about it, but write to the Marshal that evening ; and it was a good thing I did so. I brought back the conversation to the point at which the visit had broken it off ; not so much to press him, as to familiarise him with the thought of giving up his mistress. I told him that a *liaison* of that sort could not last for life ; that he had arrived at an age when it was very unseemly, and his present unfortunate situation was a good and sufficient reason for breaking it off ; I reminded him that I had always refrained from speaking to him on that subject, except once or twice, very lightly ; and I told him that only my conviction that a rupture was absolutely necessary for him would have overcome my repugnance to propose such a thing ; and he might consider the violence I had put upon myself as the strongest proof of my friendship. He listened without interrupting me, except by sighs ; and then said he quite understood that it was not pleasant to say such things ; he appreciated my motives, and felt that he ought to be grateful to me. After this I let the subject drop, for fear of saying too much, and took my leave ; he tried to keep me, but I had my own designs ; so I excused myself on the ground that I had some business to see after, as my stay at Versailles on my way back from La Ferté had been so extremely short. I also reminded him that it was almost time for him to go and see Monseigneur at the Princess of Conti's.

The rooms which the Chancellor had offered me were not yet ready ; so I went to his private room, and, finding him alone, asked permission to write an urgent note at his writing-table. It was to let Besons know that I had broached our subject, and to ask him to meet me next day at the King's Mass, when I would give him full particulars, and we could arrange our future proceedings. As I was finishing the letter the Duke de Tresmes and Marshal Tessé came in, and they were present when the Chancellor rang the bell to have it sealed. I addressed it, and took it out to one of my servants, with orders to deliver it at once. The two gentlemen, seeing that I had some business, and taking it for granted that it was with the Chancellor, took their leave almost immediately after my return to the room, leaving me alone with him. Under the circumstances I felt bound to take him into my confidence. He was much surprised, but highly approved of my design ; he blamed the

timid counsels of my wife and mother, for, while admitting that their fears were not altogether groundless, he thought that for an object so good in itself, and of such paramount importance to the Duke of Orleans, I ought to lay aside all personal considerations. He did not feel very sanguine, however, in spite of the successful issue of this first day. After this I went to sup with the Duchess de Villeroy ; her husband and brother-in-law remained behind for a minute or two when we returned to the drawing-room after supper, and she took the opportunity to tell me again how much she disliked the place where she had given me the invitation.¹ I laughed, and told her that possibly her aversion would not last much longer ; the cause of it was equally displeasing to myself ; but perhaps I was doing good service in the place where she had found me. " Oh, come ! " she said impetuously, " these are fine prospects indeed ! How can you talk such nonsense ? " Thereupon the two Dukes joined us, and we began talking of something else.

Next day, the 2nd of January, as I was dressing, I received Marshal Besons' answer. The sight of a letter from him rather alarmed me, for I thought he had written to put me off ; but I was reassured when I opened it. He wrote that I was the truest of friends, and he would meet me at the appointed time. Accordingly I found him waiting in the Gallery during the King's Mass, and told him all that had passed on the previous day. He expressed great surprise at my boldness ; but, though matters seemed more advanced than he could have ventured to hope, he did not feel very confident of success ; he agreed, however, that we must push on vigorously, and give the Duke of Orleans no rest ; if possible, we must not let him out of our sight till we had either carried our point or saw that it was useless to persevere. When the King had gone back to his room we went together to see the Duke of Orleans. The custom of paying New Year's calls had brought a few people to his apartments ; but he soon got rid of them, and we went into the same back-room where we had conversed on the previous afternoon. As we were going in some one wanted to speak to Besons ; during his absence the Duke of Orleans said with a smile : " Now, confess ! did not you send for Besons ? " I admitted, also with a smile, that I had done so ; and I said I had thought of proposing to send for him yesterday,

¹ That is, the Duke of Orleans' rooms.

only I was afraid he would tell me not to do it. The Prince said I had made a good guess at what was in his mind. Just then Besons came back, and we all sat down.

I was the first to speak. Addressing myself to the Marshal, I related to him for the second time what had taken place on the preceding afternoon ; not to tell him what he knew already, but as a convenient way of getting the Duke of Orleans to listen again to what I had to say. When I had finished Besons asked him what he thought of a friend such as I was ; and, after repeating the story of our joint agreement to speak to him about his mistress, he supported me by some arguments of his own, not at any length, but strongly put and to the point. The Duke of Orleans made no reply except by broken sentences ; like a man submitting to an extraordinary act of violence, and putting strong constraint upon himself to enable him to bear it. I let him go on reflecting, sighing, and complaining for some time ; I then told him that it was quite as painful to myself as it could be to him to have to attack him on such a tender point ; and he might judge from that how absolutely necessary I thought it that he should conquer himself ; that when I went to La Ferté I was much distressed at leaving him in such a bad situation, but I was horrified to find how much worse it had become during my four months' absence. This was no time, I said, for deluding himself with flattering hopes ; his position had become intolerable, and if he meant to save himself from falling into the lowest depths of degradation there was only one way out of it, and that was to separate himself from the woman who held him in bondage ; it seemed a harsh and cruel thing to say, but after all he must leave her some day, and now was the time to tear himself away. If he did so, I added, I felt convinced that he might raise himself to a position of greater credit and power than he had ever yet enjoyed. The Marshal repeated my last words with strong approbation, saying that was his opinion too ; and we continued in that strain for a few minutes, throwing the ball from one to the other, to give the Prince time to reflect on what I had said, without pushing him too hard.

After a somewhat prolonged silence the Duke of Orleans asked us, looking more particularly at me, why we imagined that a separation from his mistress would have the effect of raising him so high. He could understand that it would

please the King up to a certain point, but his *liaison* with her had nothing to do with the affairs which had brought him into disgrace. It had lasted a long time, and before these other affairs happened he had not been on bad terms with the King. He did not see, he said, what concern it was of any one else; and he asked again why we thought that a separation from her would do anything to restore him to his position at Court and in society.

As he seemed to address himself to me rather than to the Marshal, I took it upon myself to reply. I told him that his present mode of life scandalised everybody—not only religious people, but men of the world; but that was not all—it had led to his being accused of much worse things. He imagined perhaps that his dabbling with sorcery, and his attempts to pry into the future, had never attracted much attention, or had been forgotten; but it was reported that he had taken to them again, and the most exaggerated stories were told about them, so that they were imputed to him as a most heinous crime. He was looked upon as a man devoured by the desire of becoming a reigning Sovereign, a desire born indeed of his own ambitious nature, but encouraged and inspired by the revelations he had received during his researches into the future. These researches, I said, were looked upon with horror by some, with scorn by others; but all were alike convinced that they had inspired him with schemes which no loyal subject could entertain; they were regarded as the real origin of the Spanish affair; and they were the cause of far worse designs being imputed to him, so horrible and sinister, indeed, that I could not bring myself to tell him what they were.

He begged me most strongly to speak out and tell him what I meant; and that was just what I had hoped he would do. After a show of reluctance, to excite his curiosity and prepare him to hear something very horrible, I said that, as he commanded me to speak out, and as it was really necessary that he should hear things which no one else dared tell him, I would conceal nothing from him. He must know, then, that he was commonly reported and believed to have made a secret compact with the Court of Vienna, by which the Emperor was to use his influence with the Pope to have his marriage with the Duchess of Orleans declared null and void, on the ground that he had been forced into it by superior authority, his children being consequently declared

bastards ; that he was then to marry the Queen-Dowager of Spain, whose hoards of money and jewels would enable him to make his way to the Spanish throne without casting too great a burden on the Allies ; that after the death of the Queen, who, it was certain, would have no children, he was to marry Madame d'Argenton, to whom the spirits had promised a crown ; and finally, that it was extremely fortunate for him that the Duchess of Orleans had recovered from her late illness, and gone safely through her confinement, for this had imposed silence on wretches who were not ashamed to go about saying that she was poisoned, that he was not Monsieur's son for nothing, and that he was about to marry his mistress.

The Duke of Orleans was indescribably shocked by this terrible recital ; he tried to interrupt me more than once, but I felt as if I were taking some nauseous draught ; and was determined not to sip it, but to swallow it at one gulp. I raised my voice, and would not let him say a word till I had completely finished. A dead silence followed. Besons, horrified at what he heard, kept his eyes fixed on the floor ; expecting every moment, as he told me afterwards, that it would open and swallow him up. It was not that I had said anything new to him ; we had talked these things over, and in fact he had told me some of the worst himself ; but to listen to me coolly repeating them to the Prince was almost too much for his feelings. After a pause the Duke of Orleans broke out into bitter complaints of the wickedness of people who could spread such reports, accusing him of meditating crimes which would be as senseless as they were barbarous. He said he did not know which astonished him most, the villainy of spreading such calumnies or the silliness of those who could believe them. I let him relieve himself by these very natural outbursts, and in the meantime the Marshal regained his scattered wits to some extent ; he sympathised with the Prince's just indignation, but briefly confirmed all that I had said.

I then told the Duke of Orleans that, now that he knew the cause of his abandonment by society and of the extreme dislike for him shown by the King and his family, he could easily see why I looked upon a separation from his mistress as the only remedy. His connection with her was regarded with general indignation, not only because it had lasted too long, but also because of the effects which were attributed to

it ; and, so long as it lasted, he might depend upon it that fresh calumnies would be continually invented and spread broadcast concerning him. I paused a little after this, so as not to press him too hard, and to give him time to become accustomed to my arguments, which were the more painful to him because they were undeniably true and well founded. The Marshal now came to my rescue, and, having only to follow the road which I had frayed for him with so much exertion, he spoke in his turn with much sense and vigour.

The Duke of Orleans, completely exhausted by grief and anger, said nothing ; and it was much if he listened to us at all. Suddenly, as if starting out of sleep, he cried : “ How can I make up my mind to do such a thing, and what could I possibly say to her ! ” When I heard this I saw a gleam of hope. I replied that he had too much sense not to see that in a case of this sort it was essential to make up his mind quickly, and act with promptitude. I had not ventured as yet to discuss the best manner of effecting a separation ; but my opinion, in which I thought Besons agreed, was, that if Madame d’Argenton was to remain at Paris it would be useless and dangerous to break with her at all ; dangerous, because he would never be able to keep away from her, and, if he saw her, the whole thing would begin afresh ; useless, because even if he did refrain from meeting her, which I considered impossible, he would never get the King or any one else to believe it ; and he would be no better off than before.

At these words he interrupted me impetuously to ask what I suggested that he should do then, and how he could be expected to break with her without seeing her again, since she had not given him the slightest reason for displeasure. I replied quietly that, if he was quite determined to see her, it was useless to discuss the subject any longer. The Marshal, joining in, spoke very warmly on the same point, saying that a meeting could only result in renewing the connection, and making it firmer and more durable than ever ; he implored the Prince, for God’s sake, not to give way to this weakness, which he would never cease to repent, but to make up his mind neither to see the lady nor write to her ; for otherwise he had better at once give up all thoughts of separating from her.

The Prince tried to expostulate ; whereupon I said that to refuse to see her again was the greatest compliment he could pay her, since it showed that he dared not trust himself

in her presence. I then went on to consider what would be the best course for him to pursue. My advice was that he should go to the King and appeal to him to save him from himself, confessing that he was the victim of an overpowering passion, the consequences of which he deplored ; telling him that he came, relying on his old kindness, to ask him to do what he was too weak to do himself, namely, to put an end to his connection with Madame d'Argenton, and with this object to use his authority and compel her to leave Paris ; for he felt that only in her enforced absence could he make an effort to extricate himself from the pit into which his passion had plunged him. I added, that if he appealed in this manner to an uncle who had felt real affection for him, and given him many proofs of it ; to a father, justly indignant at the manner in which his daughter had been treated ; and to a man of the world, whose own personal experience had taught him the power of an ungovernable passion ; he would so touch his heart that he would be received like the Prodigal Son. I told him I knew, on good authority, that the chief reason why the King had felt so much hurt about the Spanish affair was that he had really been fond of his nephew ; for one thing, because he had always behaved to him with a freedom and absence of timidity or constraint which he had never met with in any of his own children ; and it had been a cruel disappointment to find, as he thought, that his affection was not returned ; I knew that, on one occasion at least, he had said so to Madame de Maintenon, in so many words, his lips quivering with emotion. I could not doubt, I added, that if he came to the King in this way, appealing to his old affection and asking for help in his struggle with himself, his heart would be touched ; and he would be disposed to overlook all his nephew's offences, considering the worst of them, including his reprehensible and suspicious prying into the future, and even the Spanish affair itself, to have proceeded only from his ungovernable passion for Madame d'Argenton.

The Duke of Orleans had not patience to listen to me further without interrupting me. "What !" he said, "I am to throw the blame of all the iniquities laid to my charge on to Madame d'Argenton, and get out of my trouble at her expense ! It is not enough that I am to break with her, if I do break with her ; but I am to expose her to the consequences of the King's displeasure ! Nothing could be more

unjust, to say the least of it, for with regard to the Spanish affair she is perfectly innocent ; she had nothing whatever to do with it. Forgive me if I tell you that I am astonished to hear such a suggestion from you, of all men in the world ! ” “ You are blinded by your passion for her, sir,” I replied, “ and it is your passion which suggests these delicate scruples. I am confident that I can overcome them if you will listen to me with some distrust of your own impulses in a matter which touches you so nearly. You think I mean to make a scapegoat of Madame d’Argenton, and you start back as if I had proposed something dishonourable. I do not deny that such is my intention, and I appeal to the Marshal to decide between us.”

The Marshal, urged by the Duke of Orleans to give his opinion, hummed and hawed ; and finally declared that what I had suggested was repugnant to him. I did not give in, but begged them to hear me out. Nothing, I said, could be more shameful than to secure one’s own safety at the expense of another ; it was still worse if one had lived with that other person in close intimacy, and worst of all if one had to tell a falsehood ; but there was no question of anything of the sort in this case. I did not ask the Prince to tell the King anything that was not strictly true, nor was he asked to injure Madame d’Argenton. I put the question to him point-blank whether it was not his passion for her which had made him forsake his family and lead an obscure, dissipated life with a set of low companions ; amusing himself with pleasures unworthy of a man of his rank and abilities, and plunged in extravagance which had seriously damaged his fortune. I asked him, further, whether he could deny that it was the influence of Madame d’Argenton which had led him to renew his inquiries into future events, after giving them up for a time ; and whether the stories told of these inquiries, even by himself, did not afford some justification for the sinister interpretations which had been placed upon them.

He admitted, very candidly, that he could deny none of these things. Then, I went on to say, since it was literally and notoriously true that all the disorders of his life, and all his errors, with the exception of the Spanish business, sprang from his connection with Madame d’Argenton, he would be telling the King nothing false ; nothing indeed which he did not know already, if he spoke to him as I

suggested. As for his fear of injuring Madame d'Argenton, I looked upon it as absurd. She would be compelled to leave Paris, certainly ; unless she did so there could be no separation ; but beyond that I did not see what could happen to her. He would no doubt make ample provision for her comfort ; and I felt quite sure that the King would not destroy the whole effect of the separation by harsh proceedings against her, which must necessarily offend and irritate his nephew. With regard to the Spanish affair, I did not see how he could very well tell the King that Madame d'Argenton was the cause of some of his errors, but not of this particular one ; I advised him to speak of them in general terms, without specifying anything ; and if the King chose to think she had a hand in the Spanish business, it would do her no harm whatever.

On this point we had a rather long discussion ; Besons would not quite give in, and the Duke of Orleans declared that my suggestion was something in the nature of a courtier's trick. I asked them to say definitely what it was that shocked them. Besons attempted to reply, but as he was in reality quite convinced that Madame d'Argenton ran no risk whatever he soon desisted. The Duke of Orleans also let the subject drop, without admitting that he was beaten ; he said that all this discussion was mere waste of time so long as he had not made up his mind on the main point, namely, the separation from his mistress ; and he had not yet done so. After this he relapsed into a profound silence, which neither the Marshal nor I cared to interrupt after the warm debate we had just concluded.

Before long, however, I began to perceive that silence was irksome to him ; he had something on his mind which he could not quite bring himself to talk about, though it would be a relief to him ; several times he began to speak, and broke off before he had completed a sentence. I was emboldened at last to tell him that I saw something troubled him which it would be a relief to confide to us. I did not wish to press him, but I begged him to remember that he was with his two most attached servants, and in a situation which demanded a complete absence of constraint. He made no reply, and I held my tongue. After a long internal struggle he suddenly broke the silence, and said that there was indeed something which it gave him the greatest pain to mention, but which, trusting us as he did, he would no

longer attempt to conceal. What chiefly kept him from doing as we wished was the state of his domestic affairs, and the thought of the life he would be forced to lead after breaking with his mistress.

I said I had guessed to a certain extent what was passing through his mind, and the cause of his agitation, though out of respect I had refrained from showing it; I was glad, however, that he had spoken so openly to us, his faithful and attached servants. I was not surprised, I added, that he should dislike the prospect of domestic life, for he had never had an opportunity of appreciating its delights. On this he broke out, repeating my last word with passionate scorn; and told us plainly that he had an aversion for his wife which he felt he could never overcome. I looked at the Marshal, and, addressing myself to him, said I had expected to hear something of the sort. It was only natural that the Duke of Orleans, having been compelled against his will to marry when very young, should have these feelings; especially as he had fallen among people who did their best to encourage them, and make him think it a sort of point of honour to show them openly; and, moreover, his whole heart had been occupied for some time by a passion for another person. It was not only natural that he should look upon his marriage with aversion, but it was almost impossible that he should have done otherwise. I hoped, however, that his good sense would enable him to overcome the effects of bad advice and unrestrained passions, and form new habits, for the sake of his own repose and the future of his family.

Besons expressed the same sentiments, and spoke highly of the Duchess of Orleans, giving me an opportunity to praise her also; but these praises, far from producing a good effect, irritated the Duke of Orleans, and he relapsed into his former agitation and embarrassed silence. At last he unburdened himself completely, telling us things which we would rather not have heard, but which, nevertheless, it was very fortunate that we did hear. He told us of his suspicions about his wife's conduct, concealing nothing, giving names and the most circumstantial details. Besons attempted to reason with him on general grounds, and did it very well; but it happened by an extraordinary and most fortunate coincidence that I was able, by facts within my own knowledge, to show that he was mistaken; in short, I proved to him so clearly that his suspicions were absolutely

groundless that he gave in ; all he could say was, that if I knew anything against his wife I should not tell him.

“ No, sir,” I said warmly, looking him straight in the face, “ no, sir ; most certainly I should not ; but also I should not speak so positively as I do if I were not absolutely convinced of her innocence. To speak evil of her, even if I believed it to be true, would be a treacherous and disgraceful act ; but I should look upon it as equally treacherous to endeavour to convince you of her innocence if I believed her to be guilty. If I had reason to think that your suspicions were unfortunately well founded, I should have fallen back upon generalities and platitudes, which are easy enough to find ; I should not have informed you, as I have now done, of circumstances within my own knowledge which are proof positive that you have been entirely misled. I always put truth and honour before everything ; and to speak as I have done without being thoroughly convinced of her innocence would be consistent with neither.”

This clear and positive assertion, in which I was quite sincere, forced his last entrenchments, and he could not conceal his pleasure at finding that he had been wickedly deceived. He spoke at some length on this strange topic, and showed that he was under no delusions as to the originators of this disgraceful calumny. He named Madame la Duchesse, Madame d'Argenton, and some other abandoned women, most of them friends of his mistress ; we made him feel ashamed of having believed their tales, for no one would have attached much importance to anything they said even about a person quite indifferent to them ; and it was obviously to their advantage to sow discord between him and his wife. I told him he ought for ever to bless this day, on which a lucky chance had furnished irrefutable proof that these stories were malicious falsehoods ; and, becoming bolder now that the poisoned cause of his aversion was removed, I began again to speak highly of the Duchess of Orleans ; praising her patience, and telling him what a lively interest she felt in his reputation, and how useful the King's affection for her had been to him at the time of the Spanish affair. Besons seconded me very well, and the Duke of Orleans listened patiently. Then we talked of the delights of a happy marriage ; and, as we both spoke from the most fortunate experience, we made some impression upon him.

In this frame of mind we left him, rather against his will ; but the hour was growing late, and we were really worn out by our exertions in this extraordinary interview. He begged us not to leave him to face this terrible struggle alone, now that we had forced it upon him ; and we promised to come back directly after dinner. When we went out Besons told me that I was the best and boldest friend imaginable ; that I had more than once made him tremble and taken his breath away ; but he admitted that I had said no more than was necessary if we were to succeed, which as yet he hardly dared hope for. He promised to back me up as well as he could, and said that, above all, we must prevent the Prince from going to Paris, and, if possible, not lose sight of him till all was over. We then separated hastily, so as not to make the servants talk ; but we heard afterwards that this long visit, coming so quickly after mine of the previous evening, had already aroused their curiosity. We agreed to come back as soon as we had dined, and spend the rest of the day with the Duke of Orleans.

During this interval it occurred to me that, in our conversation of the previous evening, the Duke of Orleans had appeared to hope too much from his near relationship to the Royal Family ; he had told me that, although the King and Monseigneur evidently disbelieved his explanations about the Spanish affair, he had found the Duke of Burgundy much more favourable, and the Duchess entirely so. My reply was that the Duke of Burgundy took quite as severe a view of his conduct as the King and Monseigneur, but was influenced by his wife, who wished to save him not only because he was her uncle, but because of her affection for the Duchess of Orleans. I told him that, in spite of this, he was much mistaken if he thought he stood well with her. She had acted like a mother who would do all she could to save her son from the penalties of the law, even if she knew him to be guilty ; but would determine nevertheless to make him feel her indignation in private. This comparison reminded him that he had indeed found the Duchess's manner towards him much colder since the close of the Spanish affair than while it was still going on. Reflecting on this, I determined to recur to the subject, and if possible dispel any illusions as to his prospects of friendly assistance from that quarter.

I returned to his rooms a little before three, and found

Besons already there. The Duke of Orleans seemed pleased to see me, and made me sit down between himself and the Marshal, whom I complimented on his punctuality, asking what they were talking about. "The same subject," he said, "and the same battle is still going on." I replied that it was high time for the Duke to put an end to all this uncertainty, and make up his mind to an act which would extricate him from as wretched and dangerous situation as a Prince of his rank ever found himself in. I then went on to point out how absolutely helpless he was, since even the Duchess of Burgundy, who had been his best friend in the crisis of the Spanish affair, had deliberately kept aloof from him ever since. I dilated on this topic at some length; the Duke of Orleans did not interrupt me except by sighs, but kept on fidgeting about in his chair like a man whose mind is ill at ease.

About this time Mademoiselle came in, followed by her governess, Madame de Maré. She kissed her father, who was passionately fond of her, and began chatting with him, while I talked to Madame de Maré. She was my relation, and a great friend of mine. I whispered to her to take her Princess away, as she was interrupting an important conversation; but she had not the trouble of doing so, for in a few minutes the Duke of Orleans himself sent her away, and we sat down again. This visit furnished me with new weapons, and I appealed to his paternal affection. I reminded him that nearly two years previously the King had, of his own accord, spoken of Mademoiselle as a suitable match for the Duke of Berry. I asked him what he meant to do with her, for she was now fourteen, and looked older. After the prospect of so great a marriage for her any other would seem unsatisfactory; yet, on account of his present situation, that prospect had vanished completely, and the only possible way of restoring it, that I could see, was to break with his mistress, and in the manner which I had suggested.

The Duke of Orleans no longer raised objections to the manner of effecting the rupture, only against the rupture itself; and, as he did so more in grief than in anger, I was encouraged to go a step further. I asked him whether, when his mind was finally made up, he would not speak to Madame de Maintenon. He did not reply for a minute or two, and then said that, if matters ever got to that point, he thought he must speak to her. Then I advised him to make

the same statement to her that he had suggested in the case of the King ; only that he should lay more stress on his feelings of gratitude and affection towards the King, giving her to understand that only his desire to regain his goodwill would have induced him to make so painful a sacrifice. He quite agreed with me in this, as did the Marshal. I went on to remind him that a penitent sinner always found more favour with the King and Madame de Maintenon than a man of irreproachable life who had never gone astray ; I quoted instances of persons whom they had deservedly despised and disliked ; but whom, on their repentance, real or feigned, they had admitted to the highest degree of favour. I impressed upon him that an appeal to this feeling was his last resource, for his position was growing worse from day to day ; and I implored him to seize his opportunity while there was yet time, for every moment was precious.

The Marshal backed me up well ; but, to my sorrow and alarm, I perceived clearly that the Duke of Orleans was by no means so favourably disposed as when we had left him in the forenoon ; he had unfortunately recovered his wind during our brief absence. He said, with a firmness which I had not remarked in him during the two previous conversations, that it was premature to discuss the point, because he had not made up his mind to do anything ; but if it ever did come to that stage he should speak first to Madame de Maintenon. He explained his reasons, which appeared very judicious to Besons and to myself ; but I was alarmed to find him able to reason so clearly, considering the state of depression in which we had left him before dinner. I felt that we must carry the position by assault, as it were ; for if we gave him a whole night to think it over he would probably refuse to listen to us when we returned in the morning, or, more probably still, we should find that he had gone off to Paris. I determined to put everything to the touch, and try to carry our point by main force. Besons was discussing the arguments for speaking to Madame de Maintenon or to the King ; I let him talk on, and, when he had finished, maintained a profound silence ; in the meantime I was thinking over what I was about to say ; and, to confess the truth, I was trembling.

After a long pause I turned to the Duke of Orleans, and, looking at him sorrowfully, said that, painful as this conversation might be to him, I could assure him it was far

more painful to us. I knew it was hard for him to struggle against an overpowering passion, but I begged him to consider how hard it was for one friend to wound another in his tenderest feelings, as we were doing ; to say harsh and cruel things to him, and drive him to despair by our arguments and entreaties. It was hard, I said, to bring ourselves to treat a friend so, even when he was our equal ; much harder, when he was our superior in rank and accustomed to be addressed with deference and respect ; hardest of all, when he was a man whom we really esteemed for his natural ability and the many good points in his character. He must see, I added, that we should not have undertaken such a task if we had not thought it urgently and vitally necessary for his welfare ; words could not express the repugnance we felt for it, but, having undertaken it, we felt in honour bound to persevere till we saw it was hopeless ; and I implored him, for God's sake, not to inflict upon us the cruel mortification of feeling that all our efforts and entreaties had been in vain. I reminded him how I had on three previous occasions touched lightly on the same subject ; but, seeing that he was not disposed to take it in good part, I had at once desisted. I begged him to compare my cautious reserve on those occasions with my present conduct, and draw his own conclusions ; and finally urged him once more not to let himself sink to the lowest depths, through sheer weakness and want of courage to extricate himself.

Here I paused, to recover my breath and renew my stock of courage, and also to see what effect I had already produced. Besons, moved by what I had said, spoke in the same strain, but far too moderately ; for it was useless now to appeal to the Prince's reason, If that was not convinced by this time, it never would be so ; what was required now was a passionate and forcible appeal to his better feelings. I was glad to perceive that he no longer seemed so confident ; he had relapsed into the depression which had seemed to be of good augury before ; and I saw the time was come for a final effort. No one said anything for some moments ; at last I again broke the silence, which was becoming oppressive. I began by some complimentary remarks, to prepare the way for what I had to say. When I thought the time had arrived to let him hear a different sort of language I told him that it was as strange as it was deplorable that

he should so misuse his talents and ability ; that he was the only member of the Royal Family capable by his capacity, and his experience in commanding armies, of saving the kingdom of his ancestors, if only he would put himself in a position to be consulted and employed ; that, instead of doing so, he chose to bury himself in a slough of debauchery which would disgrace the most humble private person ; that I had hitherto refrained from speaking my mind freely, but, seeing that our previous appeals had produced no effect, I was determined to do so no longer, even at the risk of offending and displeasing him ; for I should never forgive myself if I left anything untried to rescue him, and, with the justly high opinion I had of him, I should always feel that he might have been rescued, but for my ill-timed reticence and deference.

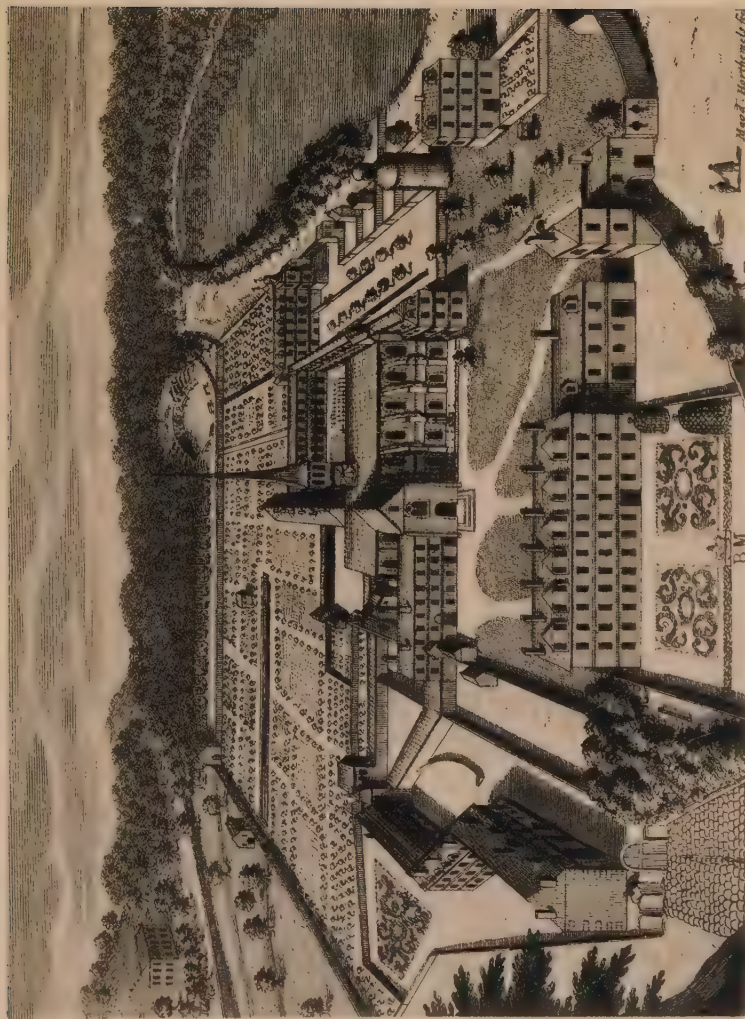
After this preamble I rose abruptly, and, turning towards the Duke of Orleans with emphasis, I told him I could no longer conceal from him the just indignation of the public, which had placed great hopes in him. For a long time people had made allowances and excuses for him, but they now looked upon him, some with contempt, some with a sort of angry disappointment—feelings which were expressed quite as strongly by men of loose morals as by the most austere. There was a time for all things, I said ; his licentiousness had been tolerated on account of his youth, but when people saw that neither advancing years nor responsible employments made any change in his mode of life, that, on the contrary, he was going from bad to worse, and was now living in open and scandalous adultery, they found it intolerable ; it was not to be borne that a Grandson of France, at the age of thirty-five, should do things for which a man of lower rank would long ago have been punished by the magistrates and the police, or would at any rate have been prevented from causing a public scandal. It was the impression left by his licentious behaviour, I said, which gave rise to the sinister interpretation placed upon his imprudent researches into hidden things. I believed them to be innocent enough, but I could not conceal from him that it was natural for people who did not know him to think otherwise ; at any rate, from the King and Monseigneur downwards, there were very few who did not take the darkest view of them.

In short, I said, the public, furious at being disappointed

in their hopes of him, furious, too, because no one could be found capable of taking the place which was properly his, were determined to show him no mercy. But, I added, I believed they were equally ready to come back to him if they saw him capable of breaking the squalid bonds which held him, and making a tacit avowal of his errors by amending his life and devoting himself sincerely to his duties. Such an act of courage would, I believed, extort the admiration of everybody, and the public, seeing their hopes revive, would joyfully come back to their old opinion of him.

I watched the Duke of Orleans closely while I was speaking, and I perceived that my impetuosity had made a profound impression on him. Nevertheless, I stopped, and sat down as if I had finished, to give the Marshal opportunity of coming to my aid. But I had something more to say ; and I was the more determined to say it when I saw the state to which Besons was reduced. He had done nothing but stare at me, terrified at the language he heard me use ; and now found courage only to utter a few approving monosyllables. I saw he was so frightened that I had to intervene again ; I asked the Duke of Orleans, in a tone of anguish, whether he would come to a decision, and send to ask Madame de Maintenon for an interview next morning. He did not answer for some time, and then said that he could not yet make up his mind to it. This word “ yet ” gave me great hopes, and, turning to the Marshal, I begged him to say something, and not make me odious by leaving all the importunity to me. On this he did speak, though feebly ; and concluded promptly by saying that all I had said was true, and he could add nothing to the force with which I had expressed myself. In his present condition, I thought he had done very well in backing me up so definitely, though so laconically. I again begged the Prince to send the message, and, seeing that he was yielding to my vehemence, I determined to attack him again.

Rising once more from my chair, I told him he must give me leave to say something more. I reminded him of the brilliant position of Ministers and Generals whom the King felt that he could trust ; how it aroused jealousy in some, emulation in others, and desire in all ; and how, so long as he enjoyed the King's confidence, he had himself been superior to them all in credit and authority, and had seen these personages, often so arrogant with others, paying



Port-Royal-des-Champs

court to him with deference and submission. I reminded him also of others, noblemen, who from their birth, dignity, and fortune seemed to be destined naturally for the highest distinctions, and yet had sunk so low through debauchery that they were unknown at Court, outcasts from every kind of society, abandoned to their shame and degradation, objects of contempt to the King and the general public. I named some of these, whom he could see for himself wallowing in the mire, in spite of their advantages and opportunities ; and when I had drawn these pictures in as lively colours as I could, I asked him to which class he would rather belong. He must be under no illusion, I said ; the more splendid his natural position from his proximity to the throne the deeper would be his fall ; it had been in his power to add to the advantages of his birth the influence conferred by the confidence of the King, by employment in the service of the State, and by public esteem ; if he deliberately chose to forfeit these advantages by a life of filthy licentiousness he would fall lower than the most degraded of the noblemen I had mentioned. He was still free to choose, I said, but his choice must be made now ; he was at the parting of the ways, and on his present decision his whole future life depended. If he chose wrong, the sepulchre in which he had buried himself alive would be finally sealed, and no effort of his own nor any human aid would ever set him free again.

The Duke of Orleans thanked me for speaking so plainly, with a groan which betrayed the deep impression I had made upon him ; I saw it the more clearly when, rising from his chair, he began to reproach Besons for his slackness. The Marshal excused himself on the ground that I left him nothing to say. I replied that my zeal made me do all the talking because I saw that, though he thoroughly agreed with me, he dared not speak out. This queer dispute gave us an opportunity of putting in some fresh arguments. In the meantime the Duke of Orleans had resumed his seat ; seeing that he was shaken in his determination, I again suggested that he should send to Madame de Maintenon. Besons asked if he should not call a servant ; and, as though not doubting that he would consent, I began to speak of the satisfaction one feels after making a painful yet generous effort. While we were thus talking to each other, not venturing to make another direct attack on him after the rude assault he had already sustained, he astonished us by

rising abruptly from his chair and rushing impetuously to the door ; which he opened, and then called loudly for his servants.

One came, and he told him in a low voice to go to Madame de Maintenon and ask her whether she could see him next morning, and at what time. He came back immediately and threw himself into his chair like a man completely exhausted. Not feeling quite sure what he had said to the servant, I asked him whether he had sent to Madame de Maintenon. " Yes, I have," he said, in a tone of despair. I instantly threw myself at his feet and thanked him, with indescribable joy. He said he was still not sure that he would go to her, whereupon Besons implored him not to draw back after taking so painful but so salutary a resolution. I contented myself with confirming him in it by telling Besons that the Duke of Orleans, having yielded to our entreaties, and committed himself so far, would not retreat at the last moment ; his heart was still sore, but my own was full of the most delightful hopes. We talked to each other in this strain for some little time, not addressing ourselves to him, but expressing our sympathy, and encouraging him indirectly. He took little part in the conversation, only, at the end he again reproached Besons for his timidity, telling him he must have seen how necessary it was to attack him strongly ; and he thanked me again for my vigorous plain-speaking. This gave me fresh hopes ; but I merely replied that I had felt it my duty to tell him things which it was necessary for him to know. Soon afterwards he asked the time ; it was nine o'clock ; and he said he wished to go as usual to meet Monseigneur at the Princess of Conti's. I obtained permission to remain for a short time with Besons, as neither of us had a suitable place for talking over such a matter ; and he then left the room.

The Marshal and I sat down again, and I asked him what he thought of the result of this painful afternoon. He said that, notwithstanding the request for an audience, he did not feel confident. I replied that, though I would not guarantee success, I was very hopeful. I then reproached him, in a friendly way, but rather bitterly, for having left it to me to say all the harshest and most unkind things. He apologised ; confessing frankly that, though he admired my courage, and the result showed that it was essential to

success, nothing would have induced him to say anything approaching to what he had listened to with terror ; he said I had frightened him so much that he did not know where he was. We admired the Prince for his willingness to listen to such unpleasant truths, and lamented that a man of his loveable disposition and brilliant talents should have fallen so low. We agreed that now we must take more care than ever not to leave him to himself ; then, thoroughly worn out in mind and body, we parted, agreeing to meet in the Gallery during the King's supper, to settle our future proceedings.

We both arrived punctually at the appointed place. I asked the Marshal if he knew what Madame de Maintenon's answer was ; but he said he had not seen the Duke of Orleans, nor any of his servants, since he left us. I said it was most important that we should know ; and begged him to go to the Prince's rooms and find out, while I waited for him. He came back saying that Madame de Maintenon had sent word that she would see the Duke of Orleans at any time during the forenoon, but he could not as yet have received this message. Thereupon I asked Besons to accompany the Duke of Orleans to his rooms when he came out from the King's supper, to be present when he received the message, and encourage him as much as he could ; to remain with him till he went to bed, and to be with him again the first thing in the morning ; and afterwards to meet me at the King's Mass, when we could make further arrangements. He promised to do all this, and we then parted for the night.

Next morning, Besons was not to be found either in the Gallery or the apartments ; the King came out of his room to go to Mass, the Duke of Orleans preceding him by eight or ten paces. In my impatience to hear whether he had seen Madame de Maintenon, I went up to him ; and, not venturing to mention names, I asked him in a low voice whether he had seen the lady. " Yes," he said ; but so faintly that I was seized with the fear that he had seen her for nothing, and asked him whether he had spoken. " Yes," he said again, in the same tone, and my fears redoubled. " But did you tell her all ? " I asked. " Oh yes ! " he said ; " I told her all." " And were you satisfied with her ? " I went on. " Completely satisfied," he said. " I was nearly an hour with her, and she was extremely surprised and delighted."

We were still walking on ; he seemed to have something to say which he could not get out. At last he turned towards me with a sorrowful look and said there was something which grieved him in connection with me, and which he must tell me ; but he begged me, as a friend, to answer sincerely. I was startled at this, but promised to conceal nothing from him. "Well, then," he said, still in a low voice, "that woman talked to me exactly as you did yesterday ; but what struck me most was that she used the very same words, and even the same arrangement of sentences. Now, tell me, had she spoken to you beforehand ? and were you merely the bearer of a message from her ?" "Sir," I said, "I am not in the habit of taking oaths, but I swear to you by Him whose dwelling we are now approaching, and by all that is most sacred, that I spoke to you entirely of my own accord ; that no one else had anything to do with it, directly or indirectly ; and that, as regards this woman and the King, not only have they not said a word to me on the subject, but it is absolutely impossible that they can know what has taken place. And now that I have taken this great oath, allow me to say that you know me well enough to believe me on my simple word." "That is quite enough," he said, "I am satisfied, but I am glad to hear you speak like that, for I confess I was struck by the similarity between your language and hers." "Once more, sir," I replied, "I assure you that I have told you the simple truth." "There is an end of the matter," he said again. "I am perfectly satisfied."

We had by this time entered the chapel, and had to separate. I managed to come out again before the end of the service, to look for Besons ; whom I found in the second room from the chapel. Finding that he had heard nothing, I told him about the visit to Madame de Maintenon, and also of the surprising similarity between her words and mine which had aroused the Prince's suspicions. The Marshal replied, with that abruptness which sometimes springs from honest conviction, that the answer was very simple ; that truth is truth, whether in Madame de Maintenon's mouth or mine, and it was not strange that it should be expressed in the same way. Just then the King passed by, on his way back from chapel ; and we parted, agreeing to meet again at once in the Duke of Orleans' room, so as to avoid being seen going there together. When I arrived

I found Besons already there ; but the Duke of Orleans was not, and it was a good half-hour before he came. In the meantime we sat down and talked ; the Marshal said our success surpassed his utmost hopes, but he still did not believe that the Duke of Orleans would speak to the King ; I, on the contrary, felt very sanguine, though far from certain.

While we were chatting in this way it came into my head that, by a singular coincidence, I was expecting at any moment an audience of the King about my own affairs, and I feared it would confirm the suspicions of the Duke of Orleans. A courtier never likes to admit that he is in disgrace ; but, after a little consideration, I overcame this petty vanity, and confided the whole affair to Besons, although my acquaintance with him was so slight ; telling him that I expected an audience, and asking whether he thought it advisable to inform the Duke of Orleans. Of course I did not tell him by what means I had obtained the audience. He was surprised and pleased at my openness with him, and strongly advised me to take the Prince into my confidence, which I determined to do. Some one came just then and asked to see Besons, who left the room.

Very shortly afterwards, while I was still alone, the Duke of Orleans came in, and at once took me to his back room. He went and stood with his back to the fire without saying a word, looking like a man beside himself. After looking at me for a moment I thought it better to tease him with questions than to leave him to his own meditations, especially as it only wanted two hours to the time when he was to speak to the King. I asked him if he was satisfied with Madame de Maintenon, and if she had really shown some sympathy for him. "Yes," he said, so curtly that I hastened to ask whether his mind was not made up to see the King a little before his dinner. His reply startled me ; he said, in the same curt way, that he would not go. "What, sir !" I said in a firm voice, "you will not go ?" "No," he said with a dreadful sigh, "it is all over !" "All over !" I said, "what do you mean ? Do you think it is all over because you have spoken to Madame de Maintenon ?" "No," he said, "I have spoken to the King." "To the King !" I exclaimed. "And did you speak to him as we agreed ?" "Yes," he said, "I told him everything." "Ah, sir !" I said with delight, "then it is really all over ! How I love and admire you ! How happy I am to see you,

once more at liberty ! And how did you manage it ? ” “ I distrusted myself,” he said. “ I have been so cruelly agitated since I saw Madame de Maintenon that I could not bear to wait the whole morning ; I went back to the King’s room after Mass. . . .” Here he broke off abruptly, and burst into tears and sobs. I retired into a corner and left him to himself. Just then Besons came in, and was taken by surprise at what he saw. I made signs to him which he did not understand ; at last we drew near to each other, and I told him it was all over ; that the Duke of Orleans had conquered himself, and spoken to the King.

The Marshal was so overcome with joy and astonishment that it was some moments before he could say a word ; then, running to the Duke of Orleans, he thanked and congratulated him warmly, and shed tears of joy. An interval of silence followed, broken only by the sobs of the Duke of Orleans, for we had to restrain our joy, out of pity for him ; and really we could hardly believe that our success was indeed complete. The Marshal and I exchanged a few words of sympathy for his distress, and after a time, to divert his thoughts, I asked him what Madame de Maintenon had said. He repeated what he had said before, that she had used exactly the same expressions as I had, and he had thought I must have been in consultation with her. I reminded him of what I had told him, and he said again that he was perfectly satisfied. Besons spoke very well on this subject, in the same way as he had spoken to me.

I thought this would be a good opportunity to tell him about the audience which the King had promised me ; he received my confidence very well ; and said, with a friendly politeness which astonished me, considering what a state he was in, that he hoped he had put the King in a good humour by what he had told him, and that his reception of me would be the more gracious. We asked him again about his interview with Madame de Maintenon. He said she had been extremely surprised and delighted, and had assured him that this act of his would more than restore him to the King’s favour ; she advised him to see the King himself, promising to make the King understand the full merit of his sacrifice, and to secure the most favourable treatment for Madame d’Argenton. She said there should be no *lettre de cachet* or anything of that sort, and that she should have leave to retire to a convent or any other place she

might choose. I had previously told the Duke of Orleans I thought that would be only reasonable, always provided that she did not retire to one of his apanages, to play the Lady Paramount there ; and he had agreed with me on that point. He also told me that Madame de Maintenon had said she would send for the Duchess de Ventadour, to make all arrangements, and he would do well to see her about it. My impatience then led me, in spite of his outbursts of grief and tears, to ask whether he was satisfied with the King's reception of him. "Very far from it," he said. I was surprised and extremely grieved to hear this, and begged him to tell me what had happened.

He told us that, having accompanied the King to his rooms after Mass, his mind full of his coming interview and burning with impatience to get it over, he had asked him to go with him into another room so that he might say a word to him alone. The King seemed startled at such a request, at an hour when he was not accustomed to see him in his rooms, and asked in a stiff and severe way what he wanted. He again begged for a few minutes by themselves ; whereupon the King, looking still more grave and frowning, had led him into the other room. There he told him the resolution he had formed in his grief at having incurred his displeasure, and begged him to send word to Madame d'Argenton to leave Paris, without putting her to the shame of being ordered to go by a *lettre de cachet*. The King appeared much surprised, but not particularly gratified ; he commended his resolution, but coldly, saying he ought long ago to have put an end to his scandalous mode of living ; promised to send Madame d'Argenton out of Paris, without a written order, and said he would see about it at once ; and thereupon had left the room abruptly, as if he thought the Prince's declaration would be followed by a request for some favour, and meant to cut it short.

I did not like this story at all ; but I still hoped that the King's coldness arose merely from being taken by surprise at an ill-chosen moment, the thing in the world which he most disliked ; and I trusted that, when he saw he was not asked for any favour, he would treat the Duke of Orleans more graciously. I hoped it the more because I did not put too much confidence in Madame de Maintenon's goodwill. She could not do less than appear pleased at the Prince's determination ; but the fatal joke in Spain was not

one to be forgiven easily, and M. du Maine was too jealous of his superior abilities not to use all his influence with Madame de Maintenon to injure him. I did my best to reassure the Duke of Orleans about the King's reception on the grounds already mentioned.

He then went on to tell us that he had just been to tell Madame what he had done; she had commended him highly, but had driven him wild by the ill-natured things she said about Madame d'Argenton. He became angry again, while he told us about it; and I was angry too, for after the hard manner in which she had always treated his mistress it was not for her to speak evil of her, certainly not at such a moment. I ventured to ask whether he did not feel capable of telling the Duchess a piece of news which concerned her so nearly; but at this he broke out and said he would not see her that day at any rate, for she would be too glad, and her joy would be intolerable to him. I said modestly that, from all I had heard of her, she was not at all likely to exult over him, but rather to sympathise with his grief; but he showed so much repugnance that I dropped the subject. After an interval, however, I brought it up again as gently as I could, suggesting what a great pleasure this double effort would give the King. I had no better success this time; he closed my mouth by saying that this question had already been discussed between him and Madame de Maintenon, that she had understood his feelings, and told him he had better not see the Duchess of Orleans that day, if it was disagreeable to him.

Although he had given orders not to admit visitors, the custom of paying New Year's visits brought some people whom he could not turn away, such as the First-President, and some other superior magistrates. He had to go away several times to receive them in another room, which he did very graciously, showing a mastery over himself of which few men would have been capable; but when he came back to us he broke out into fresh paroxysms of grief.

During one of these intervals Besons and I consulted as to the best way of avoiding the rage of Madame d'Argenton, of Madame la Duchesse and her clique, and of all the people who would be furious at seeing the Duke of Orleans once more on the high road to favour. The Marshal said he was afraid the Prince's servants already suspected something, and when the rupture with Madame d'Argenton became

known they would tell everybody that he had brought it about. There was no help for it, however ; all we could do was to agree that we would hold our tongues, and let people talk, without either denying or admitting that we had anything to do with it. I was afraid that, if the King found out my share in the business, he would be pleased with me for a day or two ; and ever afterwards I should run the risk of being blamed for any follies committed by the Duke of Orleans ; for all the great ones of the earth reason like that. They think if one has sufficient influence, once in a way, to make a man do something against his inclination, one can always dissuade him from anything he has a mind to. But, after all, this danger was not new to me and I would not let my mind dwell on it. To do what is right and honourable by right and honourable means, to act with prudence, and then trust to Providence, letting people talk as much as they please, is the best line of conduct to adopt in a Court.

When the Duke of Orleans returned he told us that he had settled 45,000 livres a year on Madame d'Argenton ; and that she had plate, jewellery, and furniture worth 400,000 livres more. Besides this, he made himself responsible for all her debts up to the time of the separation, so that she might not be persecuted by creditors. Altogether, what he gave her amounted to over 2,000,000 livres. I thought it far too much, but of course I expressed my approval ; there was nothing else to do. Before we parted Besons, at my instigation, made another attempt to get the Duke of Orleans to see his wife ; and he at last consented, to my great relief. It was now half-past twelve, and we left him. Besons told me as we went out that he was quite worn out, and that he was going off to Paris, to hide himself till the first excitement about the rupture had passed off, and keep out of the way of indiscreet questions.

CHAPTER XIX

1710

I carry the news to the Duchess de Villeroy—Her incredulity and delight—We discuss plans for establishing a better understanding between the Duke and Duchess of Orleans—She begs me to make the acquaintance of the Duchess—The King's supper—I remind him of his promise to give me an audience—He fixes it for next day—The Duke of Orleans deposes Mademoiselle de Chausseraye to convey his decision to Madame d'Argenton—Her history and character—My audience of the King—His manner becomes more gracious as I proceed with my story—I explain my bet about Lille—I complain of M. le Duc—The King accuses me of being touchy about precedence—He listens graciously to my explanation and gives me some fatherly advice—Delight of my friends at the success of my audience—Arrangements for Madame d'Argenton's future—The King is more friendly with the Duke of Orleans—The rupture generally attributed to me, to my great annoyance.

AFTER leaving Besons I went to see the Duchess de Villeroy, whom I found at her toilet with her maids ; directly I went in I asked her to send them away, a liberty I often took with her ; and when we were alone I told her the affair was settled. "Settled, indeed !" she said with great scorn, not understanding what I meant, for I had not seen her since our supper two evenings before. "Settled ! I shall not believe it till he has spoken to the King. He will promise all sorts of things, and do nothing. I know he is your friend, but, believe me, I know him better than you do !" "Have you quite finished ?" I asked with a smile. "If you have, I will tell you that he spoke to the King and Madame de Maintenon this morning, and that the separation from his mistress is settled." "Oh yes !" she said ; "no doubt he has told you he will speak to them, but he will do nothing of the sort !" "But," I replied, "I tell you once more he has done it ; I have only just left him." "What !" she cried, in a transport of delight, "the affair is really settled ? finished ? there is no going back from it ?" "Yes, Duchess," I said, "it is settled, quite settled, thoroughly and com-

pletely settled. I am not giving you conjectures or probabilities ; I tell you, simply, it is settled."

I never saw a woman so delighted. She could hardly believe her ears. She asked how it had been brought about, and I gave her a short account of our proceedings. With regard to the suspicions he had expressed concerning his wife I gave her all the names and particulars, which I have not set down in these Memoirs, for I thought it highly important that she should know them, for the sake of the complete union which I wished to establish between the husband and wife. The Duke de Villeroy, who had joined us by this time, thought so too. My story was frequently interrupted by the exclamations of the Duchess.

She then told me, in her turn, that the Duchess of Orleans had been very uneasy on the previous day, and curious to know what was going on in her husband's rooms, for she knew that he was shut up with Besons and myself, and had found out something about his tears and anguish of mind. Madame de Villeroy told the Duchess of Orleans what I had said to her after supper, without attaching much importance to it ; whereupon the Duchess of Orleans said that if any one could induce her husband to give up his mistress, I could ; that she had often tried to make my acquaintance and see more of me, but without success (it was quite true ; I never went near her except for the most indispensable visits of ceremony), so that she had given it up ; but she was glad, all the same, that her husband should have as a friend a man of honour and ability, from whom, in spite of my aversion for her, she thought she had nothing to fear. She said the Duchess of Orleans would be the more delighted at what had occurred because she had given up all hope of escaping from the insolent domination of Madame d'Argenton ; she had several times appealed to the King and Madame de Maintenon to send the woman away, but without success. I said it was very fortunate that the King had not listened to her, for if the Duke of Orleans had been deprived of his mistress by force his pride and wounded affection would have driven him to extremities ; he would certainly have suspected his wife of having instigated it, and she would have become the most unhappy Princess in Europe. Thereupon Madame de Villeroy began praising the ability and good sense of the Duchess of Orleans, her strength of character, and the fidelity of her friendship ; she said she would be eternally

grateful to me, and begged me to cultivate her acquaintance.

I asked her to tell the Duchess of Orleans that my reason for not responding to the advances which she had been good enough to make was, that I had been extremely anxious to effect a separation between the Duke and his mistress, and if I had enjoyed the honour of seeing her often my influence over him in this matter would have been seriously impaired ; that it was doubly fortunate that I had been so cautious, since I had been able to undeceive him on certain very delicate points ; for he was naturally suspicious, and if I had been on friendly terms with her he would not have placed such entire confidence in me, notwithstanding the convincing proofs I had been able to produce. Now that this consideration was removed, I said, I would gladly pay my respects to her, and do all I could to bring about a complete union between them ; I thought, however, that it would be prudent to let a little time elapse before I had the honour of seeing her, and in the meantime I begged her to believe, etc., etc.—that is, sundry complimentary messages which I asked the Duchess de Villeroy to convey to her. At the same time I expressed my hope that she would consider all that had passed as a profound secret ; not that I had any misgivings on that point, considering the nature of the affair, and her own interest in keeping it secret. I afterwards told the Duchess de Villeroy how amused I had been on the previous evening to hear Madame d'O, at Madame de St. Géran's, deploring the misfortunes of the Duchess of Orleans, and lamenting that there was no prospect of Madame d'Argenton's tyranny ever coming to an end ; whereas I knew that these misfortunes were already terminated, and that the news would become public property within twenty-four hours.

The King's dinner-hour was now approaching, and I left the Duchess de Villeroy to attend it, and leave her at liberty to dress, to go and rejoice with the Duchess of Orleans. This was the fourth day in succession that I had presented myself before the King in hopes of obtaining the promised audience, and I was beginning to be uneasy about it. The dinner was nearly over when I arrived ; I stood with my back to the balustrade. Towards the end of dessert I advanced to the corner of the King's chair and begged him to remember that he had been graciously pleased to give

me hopes that I might have an audience. He turned to me and said in a very polite way : " Whenever you please. I could see you now ; but I have some business to attend to, and I fear I could not give you sufficient time." After a moment's pause, he turned to me again and said : " But to-morrow morning, if you like." I replied that it was my duty to suit my time to his convenience, and I would have the honour of presenting myself before him to-morrow morning. His manner of replying seemed of good augury ; he spoke in an affable way, and as if he wished to hear me at his leisure. Maréchal, the Chancellor, and Madame de Saint-Simon thought so too.

As I passed by the Duchess of Orleans' rooms I was surprised to see Marshal Besons coming out, for I thought he was at Paris by this time. He told me that, being uneasy about the reports she heard from the servants, the Duchess had sent for him, and he had told her all that had passed. She had already heard of the rupture from Madame, but could hardly believe it. Besons described her as overjoyed, and full of gratitude to me, which she had begged him to convey to me. He was so terrified at the thought of the coming sensation, and in such a hurry to run away and hide himself, that he dared not be seen in my company for more than a minute or two ; just as if we had been engaged in committing a crime. I spent the whole afternoon with the Duke of Orleans, who had not yet got over his emotion. He told me he had arranged with the Duchess de Ventadour that Mademoiselle de Chausseraye should bear the news to Madame d'Argenton ; and he had sent his postchaise for her to Marly, where she had a little house of her own. She soon came ; and, though she thought it rather hard to be given such a commission, she yielded to the tears and entreaties of the Duchess de Ventadour, and consented to go and tell their good friend of the change in her fortunes.

Chausseraye was a tall, stout old maid, with a great deal of wit, sense, and ambition. She was not of distinguished birth ; her family name was Le Petit de Verno ; her father owned a wretched little property in Poitou, called Chausseraye. He had never left his native district ; but he seems to have been a good-looking fellow, for the Marquise de la Porte-Vézins, a widow, whose estates were in that neighbourhood, fell in love with him and married him. She died in 1687, leaving this daughter. By her first marriage she

had a son, a very honourable man, who distinguished himself as a General of the naval forces. The Duke de Brissac, the Maréchale de la Melleraye, and Madame de Biron, brother and sisters to Madame de la Porte-Vézins, were very indignant at her second marriage, and never saw her afterwards, much less her husband ; so that for a long time Mademoiselle de Chausseraye lived in obscurity, poverty, and wretchedness. Her half-brother took pity on her, and persuaded his relations to acknowledge this queer cousin. She soon won them over ; there never was such a clever, insinuating creature, nor one so adroit in flattery ; she could read character at a glance, and saw at once how to get round a person. To provide her with a livelihood and give her some sort of position, Marshal de Villeroy, whose influence with the Duchess de Ventadour was all-powerful, got her an appointment as Maid of Honour to Madame. In this position she made herself so agreeable to the Duchess de Ventadour that she became her dearest friend ; as they resembled each other more in morals than in capacity, she acted as her guide and adviser in many things, and the Duchess had no secrets from her. Her intimacy with Madame de Ventadour, combined with her intrigues of gallantry and of other kinds, procured her many friends, and she became a personage to be taken into account. She could do what she pleased with the Ministers ; neither Barbésieux, nor the Chancellor, so long as he controlled the finances, nor Chamillart, could refuse her anything ; she even managed to get round Desmarets and Voysin, and became rich through their assistance. She was very friendly with Madame d'Argenton and all her clique ; in this way she procured amusements for herself, and got money out of the Duke of Orleans. She had left Madame's service long ago, as superannuated, but remained on such good terms with her that she always saw her in private at Versailles ; and Madame sometimes went to call on her. Like Madame de Ventadour, she had taken to piety ; but she went on intriguing just the same ; the number of affairs she had a hand in is incredible. She gambled all her life whenever she had a chance, and lost, literally, millions. The King treated her well, and more than once gave her considerable sums. I knew her intimately, having made her acquaintance at the houses of Madame de Nogaret and Madame d'Urfé, her cousins. She was capital company ; and, having so many

distinguished friends, knew all the stories and gossip of the day. I was a great friend of hers ; but after the rupture between the Duke of Orleans and Madame d'Argenton I noticed a difference in her ; and later on I found her a dangerous enemy whenever she had an opportunity. I shall have occasion to speak of her again.

Next day, Saturday the 4th of January, I was in attendance at the end of the King's *lever*, and saw him pass from his *prie-Dieu* into his private room, but he did not speak to me. This was an unusual hour for me to present myself ; as a rule, I contented myself with seeing him on his way to and from Mass, because since his long attack of gout he dressed himself almost completely on his bed, and the crowd of attendants left hardly any room for other people at his *lever*. The parole and countersign having been given, those who had the *entrées* went out, and every one used to go into the Gallery to chat till it was time for Mass. Hardly any one remained in his room except the Captain of the Guard on duty, whom a page used to warn when the King was about to leave his private room by the other door, to go to Mass. On this occasion I stayed behind after the word for the day was given, alone with the Captain of the Guard. It was Harcourt, who was much surprised to see me remain there, and asked what I was doing. As he would see me called into the private room it was useless to make a mystery about it ; so I told him I had to speak to the King, and I thought I should be sent for before Mass. Father Tellier had stayed behind with the King ; when he came out, Nyert, the First Valet-de-chambre on duty, followed him out of the private room, looked round, and told me that the King wished to speak to me.

I went into the next room, where I found the King alone, seated on the lower end of the Council-table, as was his custom when he wished to talk to some one at his leisure. I thanked him at once for the favour which he had been graciously pleased to grant me, prolonging my dutiful speech a little to have an opportunity of observing his manner ; he looked severe, but appeared to be giving me his whole attention. Then, without waiting for him to say anything, I embarked upon my subject. I told him that, finding myself in disgrace with him (I carefully avoided that word, so as not to alarm him, but I use it here for the sake of brevity), I could not rest till I had discovered the reason ;

he might, perhaps, ask what reason I had to think that he no longer regarded me with favour, to which I should reply that, having been asked to Marly on every occasion during four years, I could not help considering my exclusion as a sign of his displeasure, which I felt the more because it deprived me of so many opportunities of paying my respects to him.

Up to this point the King had said nothing ; but he interrupted me here by saying, stiffly and haughtily, that it was a matter of no consequence, and marked nothing on his part. Even if I had not known what to think of my exclusion from Marly, the tone and manner of his reply would have shown me well enough that it was not sincere ; however, I had to take it for what it was worth. I went on, therefore, to say that it was a great relief to hear what he was graciously pleased to tell me ; and, since he did me the honour of listening to me, I hoped he would allow me to unburden my heart, and tell him about several things which had caused me great pain, because I knew they had been represented to him in a false light. Ever since reports had been current, which I could hardly believe to be true considering my youth and want of experience, that he had cast his eyes on me for the embassy to Rome (they were perfectly true, as we have seen ; but I had to speak in this way because I had never been officially informed of the appointment)—ever since these rumours I had been looked upon with envy and jealousy, as a man likely to rise, whose progress must be nipped in the bud ; it was impossible for me to do anything right ; even when I said nothing the most malevolent interpretation was placed on my silence, and M. d'Antin had never ceased attacking me. “ D'Antin ! ” interrupted the King, but more gently ; “ he has never mentioned your name to me ! ” I said I was extremely glad to hear him say so, but d'Antin had so persistently attacked me in society that I had not been able to refrain from the suspicion that he had done me a bad turn with His Majesty.

Here the King interrupted, just as I had begun to say, “ There is another man ” ; he was evidently in a better temper ; he looked at me more pleasantly ; and it was with a sort of kindness, and almost as if he liked listening to me, that he broke in : “ But you know, sir, you are given to talking and finding fault ; that is why people say things

against you." I replied that I tried hard to avoid speaking evil of any one ; as for speaking evil of His Majesty, I would die first (looking at him ardently as I spoke, straight in the face) ; as to other people, I said that, though I was very careful, it was hard at times not to speak my mind naturally. "But," said the King, "you talk about everything, especially about public affairs when they are not prosperous, with bitterness and——" Here, observing that he spoke more and more kindly, I interrupted him in my turn. I told him that I spoke very little about public affairs, and then very cautiously ; but it was true that sometimes, irritated by our misfortunes, I had expressed myself rather strongly ; that a thing had occurred, which, to my great surprise, had been much talked about ; that I would submit it to him, as to a judge, so that I might most humbly ask his forgiveness if he thought I was to blame ; or, on the other hand, if he took a more favourable view of it, that he might see that I was not guilty.

I knew for certain that a most malicious use had been made of my bet about Lille ; I had determined to mention it to the King, and, as this favourable opportunity presented itself, I at once took advantage of it ; but of course in speaking to him I avoided all direct allusion to persons concerned in the events which led to the bet. I proceeded therefore to tell him that, at the time of the siege of Lille, being impressed with the importance of preserving the place, in despair at seeing the strenuous efforts of the enemy, and the slow movements of the relieving army, in spite of urgent orders despatched by three successive couriers ; and, moreover, being annoyed at hearing constant boasts of approaching victories when I could see that precious time was being lost and the enemy's position was becoming daily more formidable, I had in a moment of irritation betted four pistoles that no serious attempt would be made to relieve Lille, and that the place would fall. "Well," said the King, "if you only spoke as you did and made your bet, because of your interest in the matter and your vexation at seeing that things were not going well, there was no harm in it ; quite the contrary. But who is the other man you were beginning to tell me about ?"

I said it was M. le Duc ; whereupon he kept silence, and did not tell me, as he had done about d'Antin, that he had not spoken about me. I then told him, as briefly as I could,

all about Madame de Lussan's proceedings ; but as, in speaking about my bet I had carefully avoided mentioning Chamillart, Vendôme, or the Duke of Burgundy, so in this case I said nothing about Madame la Duchesse, his daughter ; and was consequently free to speak all the more strongly about Monsieur le Duc. I told the King that I would not weary him by going into the details of Madame de Lussan's affair ; it was enough to say that it had been decided against her by the Chancellor and Council, and also by the First-President and the Parliament of Paris, and she had been severely reprimanded by them for her methods of carrying it on ; that she had spread all sorts of lies about me, and I had been forced to retaliate by publishing some unpleasant truths about her ; which, I must admit, were expressed in strong language ; that before publishing them I had asked M. le Prince to let me read to him what I had written, and after listening to it he had told me that he did not object to the publication ; that I had tried to submit it to Madame La Princesse and M. le Duc in the same way, but had never been able to see them. I said it was strange that M. le Duc should take up the cause of Madame la Princesse's Lady of Honour more warmly than M. le Prince, who had given her a sharp reprimand for her conduct ; and, since His Majesty did not object to his subjects going to law with each other, it would be strange if one might not defend oneself against Madame de Lussan's lies. I added that I had perceived, on many occasions, that M. le Duc had never forgiven me ; one horrible thing he had done, namely, when I was absent at La Ferté at Easter, as was my custom at that season, and when I could not know that M. le Prince's death was so near at hand, he had said to His Majesty, with reference to the affair of the mourning-cloaks, that it was a pity that I was not there, for I should have made a great fuss about it.

The King listened to me without interruption, and I saw that I had made an impression on him ; he now said, with the air of a man who really wishes for information, that I had the character of being touchy about matters of precedence ; that I had been mixed up in a good many affairs of the sort, and had stirred up other people, who looked upon me as their leader. I replied that it was true I had sometimes taken an active interest in such matters, not thinking that it could displease him ; but I begged him to remember

that I had not done so since the affair of the collection, four years ago. As briefly as possible I reminded him of the facts of the case, and also of that of the Princess d'Harcourt, adding that I thought he had been satisfied with my explanation at the time. He said that was so; and made some remarks, of his own accord, which showed me that he remembered the particulars perfectly; upon which I told him that the House of Lorraine took every opportunity of showing that they had not forgiven me.

Then, returning to my former subject, I said that, having been most careful to avoid such disputes for four years, it was rather hard that M. le Duc, whom I had never offended, should try to mix me up in one, at a time when I was absent and thinking of nothing of the sort. While I thus returned to the charge about M. le Duc, and during my previous remarks about the Lorrainers, I ventured to adopt a more familiar tone; and the kind, attentive way in which the King listened, showing that he was not bored, emboldened me to add that it seemed useless for me to try to keep out of disputes, for I had heard from many sources that my name had been freely mentioned in connection with the affair between the carriages of the Duchess of Mantua and Madame de Montbazon; and I ventured to ask him how I could possibly prevent people from saying these spiteful things; for I had been away at the time of the adventure of those ladies, and knew absolutely nothing about it.

"That only shows," said the King, in a really fatherly manner, "what sort of a reputation you have in the world, and you must admit that, to a certain extent, you deserve it. If you had never been mixed up in any of these affairs, or, at any rate, if you had not taken sides so warmly and shown yourself so touchy about questions of precedence, people would not say such things. That shows you also how careful you must be in your conduct, so as to let this impression of you fade away, and not give people any pretext for talking about you." I repeated that I had been most careful for four years, as I had had the honour of telling him; but I begged him to consider that, though I had nothing to do with these last affairs, I seemed to be no better off. I then told him that I must explain why I had not gone to Guyenne, which he had given me leave to do; my reason was the encroachments of Marshal de Montrevel on my government which made it impossible for me to go

there till the dispute was settled ; that I had referred it to Marshal Boufflers, who had himself commanded in Guyenne, and he had decided in my favour ; but Marshal de Montrevel had declined to accept his decision, and insisted on referring the dispute to His Majesty in person ; that, on hearing this I had preferred not to go, although my private affairs urgently required my presence in Guyenne ; and let Marshal de Montrevel do as he pleased in my Government, rather than weary His Majesty with such matters.

The King was so much pleased with this that he more than once uttered words of praise, but only in monosyllables, so as not to interrupt the thread of my discourse. When I had finished he spoke at some length, commending my conduct, but carefully avoiding any expression of opinion about the matter in dispute in Guyenne ; for he detested disputes of that sort, and preferred to let everything fall into confusion, often to the great prejudice of his own affairs, rather than hear such questions discussed and be forced to give a decision.

I then went on to speak of my long absence, caused by my grief at thinking that I had incurred his displeasure ; and I took the opportunity to go beyond the ordinary terms of respect to express my affectionate attachment to his person, which I did with a sort of frank familiarity ; for I perceived, from his looks and manner, and the way in which he spoke, that I might safely venture on it. My remarks were received with a cordiality which astonished me, and I felt satisfied that I had regained his good opinion. I even went so far as to ask him, in case he was displeased with anything he heard of me, to condescend to let me know, so that I might either justify myself or benefit by his reproof and instruction. Seeing that I had no more to say, he rose from the table ; I begged him to remember me if there were any vacant quarters in the *château*, so that I might be able to pay my court to him more assiduously. He replied that there were none vacant at present ; and, bowing slightly, with a smiling and gracious air, he went into his further rooms. I bowed profoundly, and retired by the door through which I had entered. My audience had lasted more than half an hour, and had passed off far more favourably than I could have ventured to hope.

I went straight to Maréchal, to tell him all that had passed, as was his due, for I owed it entirely to him. He

was delighted, and thought my prospects most favourable. So did the Chancellor, to whom I had an opportunity of telling my story while the King was at Mass. He considered each incident of my audience attentively, and was so much astonished at hearing how the King had listened, interrupted me, answered me, and gone into minute particulars, that he declared he did not know four men in the whole Court, no matter what their position might be, whom the King would have treated in such a way. He advised me to be very cautious, very assiduous in my attendance, and to hope for the best ; for, knowing his character inside out, so to speak, as he did, he felt sure that not only were the King's unfavourable impressions of me entirely removed, but that he felt glad that it should be so. I was confirmed in my hopes by M. de Beauvilliers, and I was surprised to hear him express himself almost in the very words used by the Chancellor ; for he said he did not know another man in the Court with whom the King would have conversed so freely and confidentially. It is impossible to describe the joy of these friends, or how the Chancellor held forth about my proposed retirement from Court, which his clever kindness had prevented ; I need not say how deeply I felt my obligation to him, for which I thanked him most warmly.

I then went on to relieve the suspense of Madame de Saint-Simon, which I soon changed into happiness. It was she who had set the Chancellor and my other friends at me, and thus made me have recourse to this last remedy, as I have already related. The remedy was so successful that the King always treated me afterwards, not only with kindness, but with marked distinction for a man of my age ; and this lasted without a break, till the time of his death. I say " a man of my age " because, although I was nearly thirty-five and could no longer be called young, still, people of that age were young in his eyes ; and he did not take much notice of them, unless they were brought into contact with him through holding some official position, or for some other reason. Such is the treasure which a man possesses who has a sensible and virtuous wife. She then told me what she had heard from the Duchess of Burgundy about the King's dislike for me, which she had hitherto very prudently concealed. She thought that, having asked that Princess for advice and assistance, and having been received so kindly, she ought to go and tell

her what had occurred ; she did so, and the Princess congratulated her, with many kind expressions of her own pleasure.

As it was a very rare occurrence for a private person to have an audience of the King, mine gave rise to more talk than I cared about, especially because it had lasted so long ; however, I took no notice, and held my tongue ; for no one is obliged to talk about his private affairs. Maréchal told me, two days afterwards, that the King had spoken of me to him in strong terms of commendation, and seemed highly satisfied with my audience.

I must now return to the Duke of Orleans and his affairs. When Chausseraye left the Duchess de Ventadour on the previous evening she went straight to Madame d'Argenton's house at Paris ; but, finding that she had gone to the Princess de Rohan's for supper, and would not be back till late, she sent to ask her to come and speak to her. Madame d'Argenton was in no hurry to come, but a second message brought her. Mademoiselle de Chausseraye told her that she was the bearer of tidings which she could wish had been entrusted to another ; and went on to break the news as people do that of a death. It was some time before Madame d'Argenton understood her ; when she did, her tears and shrieks announced the destruction of her happiness to her numerous servants, who were as much afflicted as their mistress. Chausseraye did her best to console her, and after a time she began to listen to reason. She asked to be allowed to retire, in the first instance, to the Abbey of Gomerfontaine in Picardy, where she had been educated, and where one of her sisters was a nun. The Abbé de Thésut, one of the Duke of Orleans' secretaries, was sent to Versailles with a letter for the Duchess de Ventadour, asking her to see Madame de Maintenon about Gomerfontaine ; he also carried another letter to the Duke of Orleans himself.

I was with the Duke of Orleans, with two or three officers of his household, and we were chatting and trying to amuse him as well as we could, when the Abbé de Thésut came in, and spoke a few words to him in a low voice. His face immediately fell ; he got up and went with the Abbé to the far end of the room ; he then called me to him, whereupon the others went out. He asked me whether I had ever heard of such a harsh proceeding, and then, after explaining Madame d'Argenton's reasons for wishing to go to Gomer-

fontaine, told me that her request had been refused. He went into a violent fit of anger, declaring that he was sorry he had not escaped from Besons and myself the night before the rupture, and taken refuge in the arms of his mistress ; as he had been sorely tempted to do. I waited till his anger had abated a little ; and then told him that, before giving way to fury like that, we had better find out a little more about the matter. He had some reason for being angry, and I felt angry too ; but I begged him to talk over the business quietly for a few minutes. I then asked the Abbé de Thésut what they wanted Madame d'Argenton to do, and why she was not allowed to choose so natural a place of retirement, where she would find consolation, instruction, and good examples.

He said Madame de Maintenon liked the Abbess and convent of Gomerfontaine ; she had sent some young ladies from St. Cyr there, and had plans for the place which she did not wish to have spoilt by Madame d'Argenton. I told the Duke of Orleans, who was still raging, that he would regret having made such a fuss about a trifle ; I did not think there was any intention of restraining Madame d'Argenton's liberty, and if he would only listen to me I would bet anything that he would be satisfied. I suggested that he should write to Madame de Maintenon, and with some trouble I got him to consent. He wrote a few words, then threw himself back in his chair, declaring that he could not think, much less write ; and he asked me to write the letter for him. I paid the Abbé de Thésut the compliment of asking him to do it ; as he refused, I sat down and wrote it. They both approved of my letter ; the Duke of Orleans took it down in his own writing, from the Abbé's dictation, and he sent it at once by Imbert, his first *valet-de-chambre*. The King being already in Madame de Maintenon's room, Imbert sent the letter in to Madame de Maintenon ; but when the King heard who had written it he took it himself ; and that was just what we wanted.

I spent the evening alone with the Duke of Orleans, and had to put up with his regrets and lamentations. For the first time I saw some of Madame d'Argenton's letters ; the Duke of Orleans wrote to her, and I had great difficulty in getting him to promise that he would abstain from doing so in future. After supper the King told him that he had seen his letter, that Madame de Maintenon did not wish

Madame d'Argenton to go to Gomerfontaine for reasons which he explained—the same which we had already heard ; but with that exception, he said, she might go wherever she liked, and make as long or as short a stay as she pleased. He spoke in a very kind and friendly way ; very different from his manner on first hearing of the rupture, when he was taken by surprise at an ill-chosen moment.

Madame d'Argenton remained only four days in Paris after receiving Chausseraye's message, and then went to her father's house near Pont-St. Maxence ; her son, the Chevalier d'Orleans, remaining at the Palais-Royal. Her departure set all tongues in motion. Her friends, though they dared not say anything against the rupture itself, declared that she had been treated outrageously. The Duchess de Ventadour merely wept ; but her sister, the Dowager-Duchess d'Aumont, a spiteful woman, equally devoted to piety and gambling, was not content with that : she compelled her daughter-in-law, the Duchess d'Humières, to come with her to see Madame d'Argenton off. The Duchess de la Ferté and Madame de Bouillon were also furious, as were all the dregs of Paris and the Palais-Royal. The enemies of the Duke of Orleans, especially Madame la Duchesse and her clique, took a different line ; they told everybody that the King had been duped ; that the Duke of Orleans had long been tired of his mistress, and his appeal to the King was merely a clever courtier's trick to curry favour and get rid of her at the same time ; his victim, they said, was much to be pitied, but he would soon be weary of a respectable life and begin a fresh *liaison*. The great majority of the public, however, approved both of the rupture and of the means by which it had been effected ; though they considered two millions too large a sum for the Prince to have given his late mistress.

As I have already mentioned, the King, when he had recovered from the first shock of surprise, was delighted ; and his behaviour to the Duke of Orleans became more friendly every day. Madame de Maintenon could hardly do otherwise than assist in this reconciliation a little at first ; and the Jesuits, whose good-will the Duke of Orleans had secured, were very useful to him. The Duchess of Burgundy also helped him, of her own accord ; and the Duke of Burgundy did the same at the instigation of M. de Beauvilliers. Monseigneur alone made no change in his

manner towards him ; the Spanish affair still rankled in his mind, and his resentment was kept alive by Madame la Duchesse and the cabal which surrounded him, their principal motive being a project which they had conceived for marrying Madame la Duchesse's eldest daughter to the Duke of Berry.

For several days nothing was talked about but the rupture ; and it was generally considered to be my doing entirely, Besons' share in it having almost escaped notice. I never admitted it, even to my most intimate friends ; for I wished the Duke of Orleans to have all the credit, and also to avoid the vengeance of those who, for their own interests, were displeased at what had happened. Moreover, I did not care to have it known that I possessed so much influence over the Duke of Orleans ; for it was by no means certain that I could always get him to do as I pleased, nor that he would always keep out of mischief. But it was of no use ; everybody remained convinced that I had been the prime mover ; and I fancy I had to thank the servants of the Duke of Orleans, who talked about the long interviews I had with their master just before the rupture.

Another mischance occurred which let into the secret the very persons from whom I most wished to conceal it. I had advised the Duke of Orleans to make friends if possible with the persons most respected in society, and among others he had begun a slight intimacy with Marshal Boufflers. In order to win him over more completely he had admitted his own errors to him, and discussed the line of conduct which he was resolved to pursue in future ; he even carried his confidences so far as to tell him all the circumstances which had brought about the rupture. My friend the Marshal was delighted to hear that this good work was my doing ; he knew what pleasure it must have given to the King and Madame de Maintenon, for the latter had often spoken to him with extreme anger about the Duke of Orleans' *liaison* ; and he did not doubt that he was doing me a good turn by telling her that the credit of effecting the separation was mine alone. I was completely taken aback when he told me what the Duke of Orleans had confided to him ; and even more so when I heard that he had repeated it to Madame de Maintenon. He was no less surprised at my cold reception of his story, and asked me the reason of it. I explained it to him ; but it was beyond his comprehension,

for his acquaintance with the Court had only begun when he was already an old man, and his knowledge of the world was not equal to his honesty and uprightness of character. He thought people could not be so unjust as to impute the future errors of the Duke of Orleans to me, merely because on one occasion I had been able to influence him for good. There was no help for it ; he could not undo the mischief he had done, and he had done it with the best intentions towards myself ; so I did not argue with him, but thanked him as cordially as I could. Neither the King nor Madame de Maintenon ever said a word to me on the subject ; indeed, I never saw the latter ; but from something the King let fall later on, which I shall record in its place, I can hardly doubt that he knew all about it.

CHAPTER XX

1710

Tact of the Duchess of Orleans—My interview with her—Her charming manners and good sense—The Duke de Noailles makes advances to me—The Duke of Orleans wishes for Besons' services as governor to his eldest son—Jealousy of the Princes of the Blood—The proposed appointment falls through—Lawsuit in the Condé family—M. le Duc makes a strange announcement—The Duchess of Orleans tries to establish friendly relations between M. du Maine and myself—I evade them politely—An ill-assorted marriage—A dowry of mill-stones—Villars' high favour—His absurdities—He is received as a Peer—His letters of Peerage are offensive to Marshal Boufflers—He has to apologise—Marshal Huxelles and the Abbé de Polignac sent as plenipotentiaries to Gertruydenberg—M. de Beauvilliers makes a confession—"Breaking Polignac's neck"—The King chooses a Protector at Rome—Career of two adventurers—Courcillon—Birth of Louis XV.

THE Duchess of Orleans behaved to her husband after the rupture with great tact, carefully avoiding any show of exultation; this pleased him extremely and he soon confessed to me that he felt drawn towards her. I was very anxious to establish a complete union between them, especially as the sudden change in his life left him with a good deal of time on his hands; and I felt that I might be useful to them both. I told him that up to the present I had made a point of not seeing her more than the other Princesses, whom I never visited except on ceremonial occasions; but, now that there was nothing to keep them apart, I asked him to tell me his wishes on this subject. He immediately begged me to go and see her, with an eagerness which astonished me. He said he had intended to speak to me about it, for it would give him the greatest pleasure if the friendship between us could extend to her also; he repeated this several times. The Duchess de Villeroy had already brought me repeated messages from her; expressing her great wish to see me, and telling me how deeply she felt all that I had done for her. She said the same thing, very warmly, to Madame de Saint-Simon

who often saw her, though there was no intimacy between them. Accordingly, after a lapse of three or four days I made an appointment with her through the Duchess de Villeroy, for she wished to see me in private.

It was in the evening, when her card-playing was over, that I went to her rooms; a few ladies, intimate friends, were still with her, but on hearing my name announced they at once withdrew. The Duchess of Orleans was in her private room, lying in a small day-bed; for she had not yet completely recovered her strength since the birth of her daughter, who afterwards became Queen of Spain. A seat was placed for me by the bedside, and I sat down. When we were alone she began speaking of her joy and gratitude in a manner which was indescribably charming and gracious; she expressed herself clearly and forcibly, and in language so admirably chosen that I was quite astonished. With great tact she contrived to let me know that she was aware of the service I had rendered her in the very delicate matter to which I have alluded, without saying anything to make either of us feel uncomfortable. She thanked me especially for what she called my generosity in coming to her assistance when I had no previous acquaintance with her, assuring me that she would never forget what I had done, and begging, in the kindest and warmest manner, that she might henceforth be allowed to look upon me as a personal friend. Then, still blushing a little (for she had blushed several times, rather prettily, while she was thanking me), she went on to say that I might perhaps be surprised at her speaking so freely to me at our first interview, for she knew she was usually looked upon, and rightly so, as a rather reserved person; but she felt that my intimacy with her husband, and what I had just done, authorised, and indeed required, her to speak with the utmost frankness. After this little preface she began talking to me in the most confidential manner about the line of conduct which the Duke of Orleans ought to adopt, in order to escape from the false position into which he had plunged himself.

I was astonished to find how much ability and good sense she possessed; and I made a mental resolution to spare no pains to bring about a complete union between her husband and herself; for I felt convinced that it was impossible for him to find a better counsellor anywhere. We made sundry plans for the future at this first interview, and agreed to

work in unison to restore the Duke of Orleans to his proper place in society. We found this task harder than we had anticipated ; but I did succeed, without much difficulty, in restoring conjugal harmony, and getting him to live with his wife as pleasantly and confidentially as it was in his nature to do—to the great astonishment of the Court, and the undisguised annoyance of Madame la Duchesse and his other enemies. Having thus brought about an alliance between husband and wife, they continually required my assistance in carrying out their designs, and I was on terms of the most confidential intimacy with both of them. Their enemies began to be alarmed about the possible consequences of this union ; and mine gave out everywhere that I pulled the strings of that establishment.

I did my best to get the Duke of Orleans to do something to bring society round him once more, but he was still shy and unsettled ; he dreaded being left alone, yet he disliked company, and he could not bring himself to make the advances necessary to attract people. The Duke de Noailles had formerly been very intimate with him, and also with the Duchess of Orleans ; but since the Spanish affair he had held aloof from them. It was he who had recommended Flotte to him, and he thought the Prince had laid too much stress on this circumstance when trying to exculpate himself. There had been some other cause for ill-feeling between them ; I never heard exactly what it was, either from the Prince or the Duke de Noailles, though I afterwards became very intimate with the latter. A dispute about precedence had arisen between the daughters of the Duchess of Orleans and the wives of Princes of the Blood ; the Duke de Noailles sided with the former. This made Madame la Duchesse very angry with him, and perhaps his wish to appease her had something to do with his behaviour to the Duke of Orleans. The confidence and affection of Madame de Maintenon had already made him a personage in the Court, and Madame la Duchesse was glad enough to make up her quarrel with him. The same considerations made the Duchess of Orleans and myself anxious to conciliate him ; she thought her husband had been in the wrong ; and the Duke of Orleans himself was uncomfortable about the quarrel, and wished to put an end to it.

Nancré was a friend of the Duke de Noailles ; he was a witty, agreeable fellow, but a dangerous rascal, not to say

scoundrel, who liked to meddle in everything and spent his life in intriguing. He was intimate with Madame d'Argenton, and on very bad terms with the Duchess of Orleans, who had good reason to be displeased with him. The banishment of the mistress and the reconciliation between the Duke of Orleans and his wife placed him in an awkward position; to put himself on a better footing he spoke to the Duke de Noailles about his quarrel with the Duke of Orleans, and offered himself as a mediator. But he promised more than he was able to perform; the Duke of Orleans distrusted him, and, hearing from Marshal Besons that the Duke de Noailles had mentioned the matter to him, he put the negotiations into his hands. Besons did what he could, but found the Duke de Noailles very stiff; and, though the latter went to see the Duchess of Orleans, she found it impossible to overcome his reserve.

Apparently the Duke de Noailles had heard either from Boufflers or from Besons that I was the cause of the rupture, and he thought I knew something about the quarrel between the Duke of Orleans and himself. Although I had always been intimate with his mother, my acquaintance with him was very slight. I noticed, however, that he was trying to make up to me; and in the end he came and spoke to me openly, as if anxious to show me that the fault was not on his side. I was rather surprised; but, as I liked all that I heard of him, I responded to his advances. He spoke to me in general terms about his quarrel with the Duke of Orleans, and asked me to give him an opportunity of telling me the whole story; but, as I did not consider that the details were any concern of mine, I quietly evaded the proposed conversation. By degrees he did renew friendly relations with the Duke and Duchess of Orleans to some extent, but he was still very cautious; and, as he was candid enough to tell us how matters stood between him and Madame la Duchesse, we did not think it advisable to press him much.

As I gave a detailed account of my interview with the King in order to give a better notion of his character, I will here mention something which the Duke de Noailles told the Duke of Orleans and myself, one day when we were chatting together, and the conversation happened to turn on Madame de Maintenon. Perhaps he wanted to let us see how much he was in his aunt's confidence; at any rate, what he told us is characteristic of the King and a good illustration of

the roundabout way in which he was influenced by those most familiar with him. He said that, though Madame de Maintenon could practically make the King do anything she wanted, she seldom ventured to ask for anything straight out ; she always got somebody else to propose it, and then, when the King asked her opinion, as he invariably did, she supported it. In this way she obtained his consent to many requests without his ever guessing that they had originated with her. It was for this reason that she found it so necessary to have a Minister entirely in her confidence, especially when she wanted anything for her own relations, for the King was always on his guard where they were concerned.

As an illustration the Duke de Noailles told us of something which had happened to himself not long before. For family reasons he had been anxious to obtain a *breve de retenue* on his government of Berry, and spoke about it to Madame de Maintenon. She approved of his request, but flatly refused to ask the King to grant it, saying that would be the way to spoil everything. She said he must himself go to the King, who would be sure to mention the matter to her, and she would then back him up. In this way, she said, she would guarantee that he would get what he wanted ; and so it turned out.

The Duke of Orleans had told me some time before that he wished to obtain Besons' services as governor to the Duke of Chartres, and he thought it would be well to take advantage of his newly restored favour to have the appointment settled. As we have seen, Besons was strongly attached to him ; moreover, he was poor, with a large family, and the appointment would have suited him ; but, since it was first talked about, he had been made a Marshal of France, and he was doubtful whether he ought to accept it. He consulted separately the Chancellor (his near relation), and myself. The Chancellor, who was prejudiced against the Duke of Orleans, and naturally had a high opinion of the dignity of officers of the Crown, thought he ought to refuse. I, on the other hand, was inclined to think that he should accept ; though I hesitated, lest my regard for the interests of the Duke of Orleans should bias me ; for I felt that Besons trusted me, and that I ought to give him an honest and candid opinion. I told him that the appointment was certainly beneath the dignity to which his services had

raised him; nevertheless, it must be remembered that similar appointments had formerly been held by men of the highest rank and by Marshals of France. I instanced the Marquis de Chevreton, a Knight of the Order, and a man of the most distinguished quality (he was a *Mitte de Miollens*), who had been selected by Henry IV to be governor to the young Prince of Condé, the father of the hero. I also reminded him of M. d'Estragues, M. de Navailles, and M. de la Vieuville, all three either brevet-Dukes or Marshals (the second was both), who had been successively governors to the Duke of Orleans himself. Having regard to these precedents, and taking into consideration the fact that he had married late in life, that he had a large family, and that this appointment might very likely enable his wife to obtain some other position which might be useful to his children after his death, I thought he might accept it, if the King himself offered it, but not otherwise.

Besons replied with his usual modesty that the Marshal's bâton had not turned his head so far as to make him forget his humble birth; he felt how much he owed to the Duke of Orleans, and was pleased at being selected. He would be glad if the King offered him the appointment, but he agreed with me that in his position he ought not to accept it except from his own hand; moreover, in this way he would have a reasonable excuse to offer to his colleagues in case they objected to his taking it; for he thought himself highly honoured by being raised to equal rank with them, and felt that he ought to show some deference to their wishes. He told me that the Chancellor had advised him to refuse, which I knew already; but it seemed to me that he was not disposed to take his advice.

Matters having advanced so far, it was necessary, before speaking to the King, to prepare the way by means of Madame de Maintenon and the Jesuits. The Jesuits, as I have already mentioned, were attached to the Duke of Orleans, and not unwilling to help him; but, since Father Tellier's appointment as confessor they would do nothing for any one till they were quite sure that he was free from all taint of Jansenism. Besons, a soldier and a man of the world, was quite ignorant of such matters; nevertheless, he was not absolutely beyond suspicion in their eyes. He had brought up his children at home, not sending any of them to their schools; moreover, they did not like his

brother, the Archbishop of Bordeaux, because, though they could find no fault with his doctrine, he would not let them have their own way in everything ; and he had acquired great influence in the Assemblies of the clergy by his skill in the management of their temporal affairs. However, the result of the inquiries was that Father Tellier expressed his willingness to support Besons. Unfortunately all this took some time ; and could not be kept quite secret. The Duke of Orleans himself was not very discreet, and the consequence was that the affair became known before it had been submitted to the King.

The late M. le Prince and M. le Duc had made approaches to several persons, supposed to be men of quality, with a view of getting them to accept the appointment of governor to the Duke of Enghien, but had met with polite refusals ; whereupon they had given out that they would themselves act as governors to the young Prince and merely appoint a gentleman of their household to act for them without any formal title. They chose a very honourable, sensible man for the post, named La Noue ; his pupil was fortunate in having him as governor ; it is a pity that the governor was less fortunate in his pupil. M. le Duc and Madame la Duchesse were now alarmed at the prospect of the Duke of Orleans obtaining such a decided mark of superiority over them as the appointment of a Marshal of France to be governor to his son. The other Marshals, jealous of their dignity, also began to raise objections, and alarmed the King. With regard to them he was never of the same mind two days running ; he was inclined by turns to exalt their office unduly, or to degrade it ; just now, he happened to look upon it with favour. But there was another consideration which had still more influence with him ; he wished to maintain perfect equality between two Princes of the Blood, both his grandsons by his bastard daughters. The fact that one of them happened to be his great-nephew had no weight with him whatever.

The Duke of Orleans took the affair too easily, as was too much his custom. He spoke to the King, but, though rather surprised to meet with some opposition, he thought he would have no difficulty in overcoming it. If he had posted Besons outside the door and made him come in at once, which he might have done easily, I think the King would not have held out. But this precaution had been

neglected ; and the Duke of Orleans carried his easy-going ways so far that, in spite of all I could say, he did not even let Besons know what had occurred. The Marshal was at Paris ; and, after some days, happening to go there myself, I called on him and begged him to go to Versailles at once, which he did. As soon as the King saw him he called him into his private room, and, with some complimentary remarks about his personal qualifications, told him that he did not wish to offend the other Marshals of France ; nevertheless, he did not forbid him to accept the appointment, but left him completely at liberty to do so or not. Besons was much surprised, but made a modest reply, trying to extract something which might pass for an order to accept. Seeing, however, that the King always came back to the same point, he perceived that he did not wish him to accept the appointment ; so he got out of it, though much disappointed, by saying that, since His Majesty had raised him to his present exalted rank, he was more determined than ever to accept no benefits except from his own hand. He went at once to report the result of this interview to the Duke and Duchess of Orleans, who were much surprised and disappointed.

The Princes of the Blood and the Marshals of France made no attempt to disguise their amusement ; but Marshal de Villeroy, hearing that the Duke and Duchess of Orleans were under the impression that he was one of the chief objectors to Besons' appointment, sent them word through his daughter-in-law¹ that he had not moved in the matter at all. He added that, having the honour to be a Duke and Peer, and having been made a Marshal at a time when promotion to that rank was not quite so easy as it had since become, he cared little for a dignity which he shared with such people as Montesquiou and others, and did not trouble his head about what became of his colleagues. Considering what a disastrous use he had made of his bâton, this ridiculous braggadocio was evidently intended to conceal the meanness of a courtier. There never was a man so absurdly conceited as Marshal de Villeroy ; but I have always noticed that those who had least deserved the Marshal's bâton had their heads most completely turned by their promotion.

It is now time to mention the discord into which the death of M. le Prince had plunged his family. His daughters

¹ The Duchess de Villeroy.

contested his will, by which he had left enormous wealth to his only son, M. le Duc ; much time was spent in fruitless attempts to arrange a compromise, which only resulted in making the quarrel more bitter ; Madame la Princesse and the King himself had tried in vain to restore peace, and the time had now arrived when the dispute must be decided in the law-courts. The suit was nominally between M. le Duc and his eldest sister, the Princess of Conti ; but Madame du Maine and Mademoiselle d'Enghien were equally interested in it.

M. le Duc was alarmed for the result, and determined to use all the influence which his birth and position conferred upon him. Ten or twelve days before the case was to come on he gave a great supper, quite contrary to his usual habits, to a number of persons about the Court. He drank their healths, and insisted on their drinking his in return ; he unbent so far as to utter a number of flattering and complimentary speeches, which sounded very strange coming from his mouth. Finally, he informed his guests that he had such confidence in their friendship that he felt sure they would all promise to accompany him to the courts when his case came on for trial, and not miss a single sitting ; adding that in this way he would find out who his real friends were, for those who did not accompany him would not be his friends, and those who accompanied his opponents would be his enemies. A stupefied silence followed this declaration. M. le Duc, much surprised, repeated what he had said in such a way that no one could refuse to promise without openly affronting him. Not content with this forcible enrolment of followers, M. le Duc proceeded to beat up recruits in all quarters, till his proceedings aroused considerable ill-feeling ; for nobody liked him, nor did people care about making enemies of his sisters, and still less, of M. du Maine. The Princess of Conti made a great fuss, without much effect ; but M. and Madame du Maine with their polite and insinuating manners were more successful in attracting supporters. In the end the King interfered, and forbade any of the parties interested to attend the law-courts with an accompaniment of friends.

The same day on which the King made this announcement I had a long conversation with the Duchess of Orleans. She told me that M. du Maine was anxious to know whose side I took in this dispute, and confessed frankly that she

would take it as a favour if I gave him my support. She also admitted freely that he had asked her to speak to me about it; and, without allowing me time to reply, gave me all sorts of complimentary messages from him and Madame du Maine. She said they were both extremely sorry that Madame de Saint-Simon, for whom they had the highest respect, should have held aloof from them ever since the affair of Madame de Lussan four or five years ago, though they had done their best to make up the quarrel; and they hoped that, even if they could not see as much of her as they wished, I should feel convinced of their friendly intentions, and not take sides against them openly.

I told the Duchess of Orleans that I would speak with equal frankness; I had determined from the first to observe a strict neutrality, if possible; but if I had to take sides I should not hesitate to support M. du Maine openly; I should be delighted to have an opportunity of pleasing her by doing so, but I would not deceive her; I had quite another motive for siding with M. du Maine, namely, the very courteous manner in which he and Madame du Maine had treated me in the affair of Madame de Lussan, although she was a *protégée* of theirs; and I begged her to assure them that I should never forget the contrast between their conduct and that of M. le Duc on that occasion, and would take every opportunity of showing my gratitude.

The Duchess of Orleans was highly pleased with this reply, which she seemed not to have expected. She again assured me of Madame du Maine's high esteem for myself; and asked, with an eagerness which showed that she was fulfilling a commission, why Madame de Saint-Simon would not see more of Madame du Maine, begging me to bring about a reconciliation. This was very embarrassing, for I did not at all wish to be drawn into anything like friendly intercourse with M. du Maine. I replied that, after the manner in which Madame du Maine had behaved to her sister, Madame de Saint-Simon could not have done otherwise than withdraw from her acquaintance. She said Madame du Maine had apologised, and done all she could to make up the quarrel; which I could not deny. I could see that she had been asked to bring about a reconciliation, and that she wished very much to do so; and I had great difficulty in getting out of it. But I was determined that the actual relations between Madame de Saint-Simon and

myself, on the one hand, and M. and Madame du Maine on the other, should remain as they were ; and I contrived to hold my ground, covering my determination with all the polite speeches I could think of.

Madame du Maine had just arranged a strange marriage for a favourite of hers, a rather pretty and very clever girl, of no birth, named Mademoiselle de Moras. Her family name was Fremyn ; her father had amassed some wealth, and, to acquire some sort of position, had become a *président-à-mortier* in the Parliament of Metz ; her mother was the daughter of a linen-draper at Paris. Madame du Maine made the son of the Duke de Brancas believe that the young lady would be a wonderfully good match for him ; and his father was induced to give his consent on the understanding that he was to be well paid for it, instead of having to find money for his son. The oddest part of the business was that the bride's dowry consisted chiefly of mill-stones, which they had for sale. The wedding took place at Madame du Maine's house, and she presented this noble Duchess at Court about the beginning of January.

The King made none of his accustomed New Year's gifts to his family this year, and for the first time declined to receive the 40,000 pistoles set apart for himself. He gave them towards the necessities of the army in Flanders ; for there was terrible destitution and want of all kinds of necessities.

Marshals Boufflers, Harcourt, and Villars attracted a good deal of attention during part of this winter. Harcourt, backed up by Madame de Maintenon and Voysin, was impatient to enter the Council, the doors of which had so nearly opened to admit him on more than one occasion, and was watching for an opportunity to strike down one of the Ministers. He assumed a rather overweening air of importance and authority ; all eyes were turned to him as a coming man, and he had the applause of the majority of the Court and the public in general. The lucky Villars, having received the highest rewards for a battle lost mainly by his own bad tactics, triumphed insolently over the man who had averted the worst consequences of his blunders. He was installed in the apartments of the Prince of Conti, whose mother, the Princess of Conti, was furious. M. le Duc, although on bad terms with her, was equally angry ; but, notwithstanding all the pride of the Princes of the Blood,

they did not venture to remonstrate against the King's expressed wishes. Villars' father had considered his fortune made when he was appointed equerry to the Prince of Conti's grandfather ; what would that Prince have said if any one had predicted that his grandson and daughter-in-law would be forcibly dislodged from their apartments to make room for Villars' son, and would not even venture to remove their own furniture !

There this son of Fortune received the visits of the Court with gracious affability ; it may indeed be said that he held a Court of his own. Card-playing, feasts, and entertainments went on continually ; very often the King's band played there in the evening. Villars himself behaved like a theatrical hero of romance. He was perpetually declaiming passages from some play or other ; the couch from which he domineered over the company seemed like the stage of a jack-pudding ; his wild speeches often made his hearers feel quite uncomfortable. Madame de Maintenon frequently went to see him at hours when she could be sure of not meeting other people. One day she began fondling his son, a child of eight ; the Marshal told her that she would end by spoiling him with all her kindness, adding, with a sort of sprightliness which he usually affected : " Heroes soon become habituated to the kindness of great Queens." He was guilty of a hundred extravagant speeches of this sort, on all kinds of subjects : on the war, on the prospects of peace, on the Government ; above all, in a way which made his hearers tremble, on himself ; but it all passed as an agreeable flow of humour. In short, the exalted personages who had the disposal of everything looked upon him as the last resource of the country, and on his faults as trifling imperfections, while to the eyes of more ordinary mortals he appeared like an escaped lunatic. Voysin and Desmarets often brought him their portfolios for his advice. He was a Dictator in all but the name ; all projects and arrangements were submitted to him for his approval, and every officer in the service was promoted or passed over according to his will and pleasure.

This brilliant position, however, did not make him forget his letters of peerage. His brother-in-law, the President de Maisons, drew them up for him, and put in anything he thought proper. He had the audacity to insert that but for his wound we should have won the battle of Malplaquet,

and several other things, as contrary to truth as they were offensive to Marshal Boufflers. It was Pontchartrain's duty to send the letters to the proper quarter ; when he saw what they contained he kept them back till he had communicated with Boufflers, who was mortally offended and extremely angry. This man, usually so moderate, so cautious, and so much afraid of the King, was beside himself with rage ; he spoke of Villars in the most contemptuous and insulting terms ; he declared publicly that he would lay his complaint before the King, and, if he could not obtain satisfaction from him, would oppose the registration of Villars' letters, and appeal for justice in person to the Peers and other members in Parliament assembled. Such bold speeches had not been heard for many a long year, and they caused such a sensation that the King dared not refuse the justice so openly demanded by a nobleman of Boufflers' illustrious services.

Villars, with all his overweening pride, was frightened, and shrank from an open contest with Boufflers. He disavowed any intention of offending him, and, to avoid an order from the King, sent a copy of his letters to Boufflers of his own accord. Boufflers struck out the offensive passages, and saw that they remained struck out in the official copy despatched by Pontchartrain. Villars swallowed the affront, made many professions of his high esteem for Boufflers, and sent him several apologetic messages. Friends intervened, and at last Boufflers was persuaded to go and see him. Villars received him with expressions of respect and deep regret for what had occurred ; which he accepted gravely, with the air of a superior who merely receives what is his due. Nevertheless, a deep feeling of hatred remained between the two men ; which Villars concealed under a show of submission and respect, but which Boufflers expressed, at times, in a rather unbecoming way. There was no open quarrel, however ; for Villars was afraid, and Boufflers did not wish to cause any annoyance to the King.

Another dispute arose soon afterwards, but was not carried nearly so far. Harcourt, having been made a verified Duke five years before Villars, and being so greatly his superior by birth, was very sore, not only because Villars had been made a peer before him, but because his own elevation had been merely a consequence of the other. He did not venture to present his letters of peerage before those

of Villars, but, in order to establish some sort of claim to seniority, he intended to take his seat in Parliament on the very day of the registration of his letters. Unfortunately for him, Villars got wind of his design, and was very angry. He sent a memorial to the King, explaining Harcourt's intention, and stating that his wound made it impossible for him to take his own seat at the same time. He asked the King either to grant him letters-patent to preserve his precedence over any junior peers who might take their seats before him, or to send Harcourt a verbal message forbidding him to do so. The King thought his request only fair ; and sent the desired message to Harcourt, who was extremely mortified, while Villars triumphed openly. Very soon afterwards Harcourt had an apoplectic stroke which upset all the plans of himself and his friends, and, instead of being admitted to the Council, he had to go off to Bourbon to take the waters, in no condition to apply himself to anything. He was, however, still destined to command the army on the Rhine, as in the previous year.

Marshal Huxelles had been Commander-in-Chief in Alsace since 1690 ; he had never left the banks of the Rhine till he was made a Marshal of France in 1703, and not very often after that. He had now attained the highest position which his profession could confer, and was anxious to come to Court and push his fortunes there. He wished to be admitted to the Council, or at any rate to be consulted and looked upon as a personage ; but his great ambition was to be a Duke. But to attain these objects it was necessary for him to live close to the Court ; and to give up the command in Alsace, the pay of which was 100,000 livres annually, seemed rather a high price to pay for these visionary hopes. He felt his way by making several rather prolonged visits to Paris, and at last obtained permission to remain there without resigning his command. Du Bourg was appointed as his deputy in Alsace, so that the province was burdened with the pay of a Governor and two Commanders.

Having established himself at Paris, Huxelles proceeded to attract society to his house by keeping an excellent cook, Through his friend the First Equerry he became intimate with the President de Mesmes ; and through the President, with M. du Maine. He curried favour with Mademoiselle Choin, sending rabbits' heads and other dainties every day

for her dog ; and it must be noted that he lived opposite the Duke de Tresmes in the Rue Neuve St. Augustin, while Mademoiselle Choin's house was close to the Petit St. Antoine. He also paid court to Vaudemont and his nieces, and so became initiated into the society of Monseigneur, who thought him the most capable man in France. Harcourt took him up, and introduced him to Madame de Caylus, in order that through her he might reach Madame de Maintenon. Harcourt knew him too well to fear him as a rival, but he wanted to make a bugbear of him to frighten the Ministers ; for against them he used any weapon that came handy.

But nothing came of all these important acquaintances and alliances, and Huxelles, in his disappointment, fell into a sort of melancholy ; his health gave way, and his friends began to fear for his reason. For nearly a year he shut himself up, seeing nobody but the First Equerry and his wife, and one or two other persons ; the doctors did not know what to make of his case, but saw that it was beyond the reach of their art. At last his friends set about to apply the remedies which he required ; they scolded him till he consented to go to Marly, and he recovered his spirits a little. He was in this condition when plenipotentiaries had to be nominated for the conferences at Gertruydenberg.

The Abbé de Polignac was a great friend of Torcy's, who, as we have seen, had extricated him from a very imminent danger by getting him sent on a mission to Rome. The Abbé had made good use of his opportunities there, and obtained the promise of a Cardinal's Hat ; having succeeded so far, and becoming weary of his long exile, he began to wish to return. Torcy, who wanted to make use of him in the peace negotiations, obtained permission for him to return to the Court for a few months without giving up his office as Auditor of the Rota,¹ the duties of which he performed brilliantly ; partly to have a pretext for sending him back to Rome if circumstances should require it. He had arrived about the end of 1709 ; the King received him not unfavourably ; but the Court, and especially the ladies, greeted him with the utmost cordiality. His return procured me an interesting disclosure.

¹ The Rota was a tribunal for the decision of ecclesiastical causes in the Papal States ; it also heard appeals from the Catholic Powers of Europe. It consisted of twelve judges, called " Auditors." One was appointed by France ; two by Spain ; one by the Emperor ; the rest were Italians.

I must remind my readers of the conversation I had with the Duke de Beauvilliers about the Abbé de Polignac, and the manner in which he received my advice. The subject had never been mentioned between us since, nor anything in the smallest degree connected with it. One of the first fruits of my interview with the King was that I was once more privileged to go to Marly. The first time I went there I was chatting with the Duke de Beauvilliers in his room when, all of a sudden, he looked at me intently, and said with a smile that he had a confession and an apology to make to me. I could not imagine what he meant. "Do you remember," he said, "a conversation we had in this room four years ago, and how you warned me against the Abbé de Polignac? You were a true prophet. I must confess that everything turned out just as you predicted; the Abbé de Polignac, having taken advantage of the Duke of Burgundy's taste for science to become intimate with him, and having many opportunities for seeing him alone, contrived to alienate his affection from me completely." Here I began to exclaim; but the Duke proceeded: "You must hear me out," he said. "I very soon perceived the change in the Duke of Burgundy's manner; but the more I tried to conciliate him the colder he became. He never asked my advice, never discussed anything with me; he seemed even to dislike my presence; and it was just the same with M. de Chevreuse. I took the course of never speaking to him, and answering briefly when he spoke to me; I continued to perform my official duties with sufficient assiduity to prevent the public from suspecting anything; but in reality I enjoyed no more of his confidence than the most complete stranger. This went on, if you please, for nearly a year. At last he began to make overtures to me; I received them respectfully, but made no attempt to meet them half-way, till one fine day he took me into his private room and unburdened his heart. I heard what he had to say with suitable expressions of respect and affection; I told him that nothing kept me in his service but personal attachment to himself, and my desire for his welfare and that of the State; and he could see that I knew how to keep my distance and confine myself to the discharge of my official functions. Then, in the first outburst of restored friendship and confidence, he confessed to me that it was the Abbé de Polignac who had alienated

him from me ; he said he was a sorcerer and a dangerous man. . . ."

Here I broke in : " Well," I said, " and I hope your misplaced feelings of charity did not prevent you from breaking the Abbé's neck, when you had such a splendid opportunity for doing it." " Oh, no !" he said, " that would not have been charity ; on the contrary, it would have been lack of charity towards the Duke of Burgundy himself ; and, since you call it ' breaking a man's neck,' I may tell you that I broke the Abbé's neck so thoroughly and completely that the Duke of Burgundy will never have anything to say to him again." I commended him highly ; and at the same time took the liberty of scolding him a little because he would neither take the trouble himself to find out people's real characters, nor listen to those better informed than he was, reminding him of our other conversation when the Duke of Burgundy was appointed to the command in Flanders, in conjunction with M. de Vendôme. He admitted that he had been wrong ; and, in fact, I had noticed for some time that he was inclined to pay more attention to what he called my " uncharitable remarks " about people. I then asked him how matters stood with the Duke de Chevreuse, and he told me that he was as completely restored to the Duke of Burgundy's favour as himself. It is strange ; but their conduct had been so thoroughly judicious and cautious that no one, not even the most confidential valets, had ever suspected that anything was wrong.

When the Abbé de Polignac returned from Rome he was very much taken aback at the marked coldness of the Duke of Burgundy's manner towards him. The good ecclesiastic was frightened, thinking more might have been discovered than was really the case ; accordingly, his whole conduct showed that he was ill at ease. He was soon delivered, however, by the selection of Marshal Huxelles and himself to go to Gertruydenberg.

Huxelles tried to make people believe that he was nominated against his will, although in reality Madame de Maintenon, Harcourt, and Voysin had been doing all they could to get him appointed, and M. du Maine had also lent a helping hand. The day the appointments were finally settled in the Council, Monseigneur said he did not think Marshal Huxelles would accept it ; because, besides that he was old

and infirm (he was not old, and if he was ill it was only from vexation at having nothing to do), he had declared to him not long before that he would rather lose his right hand than sign such a peace as must follow this unfortunate war. We shall see that this delicate sense of honour was only for Monseigneur's benefit, and to make himself of more importance ; if he was thought of for the appointment, he wanted to make a favour of accepting it ; if, on the contrary, he was passed over—why, then, the grapes were sour ! The King, on hearing this statement of Monseigneur's, drew himself up and said he did not think Huxelles would refuse ; but, to make sure, he sent him a message informing him that he would take no excuse. Huxelles and the Abbé de Polignac were appointed plenipotentiaries accordingly.

I will not go into the details of the negotiations, but one thing must be mentioned. The Dutch had wished the conferences to be of an informal character ; they were consequently displeased at the nomination of two Ambassadors of conspicuous position, whose appointment would inevitably draw public attention to the proceedings. To appease them, our Government had recourse to a childish and discreditable subterfuge : Marshal d'Huxelles was forbidden to display his coat of arms anywhere, so that his Marshal's bâton and his collar of the Order might not be seen, and the Abbé de Polignac had orders not to show himself except in riding-dress. This ingenious device concealed neither their names nor their character as Ambassadors ; it merely degraded the authority which the King had entrusted to them. It afforded great amusement to the Allies, who scoffed at our unworthy complaisance. It was something new to see a Marshal of France compelled to conceal his dignity, but the masquerade of the Abbé de Polignac was still more remarkable ; moreover, it was generally considered most unbecoming to appoint an ecclesiastic, and an Auditor of the Rota, to make concessions very prejudicial to the Catholic religion, and a man who had been promised a nomination to the cardinalate by the King of England, to sign a treaty excluding that Prince and his posterity from the throne in favour of a Protestant usurper.

A rather unpleasant affair for our Government occurred at this time. Cardinal de Medici, as I have already said, had resigned his Hat in order to marry ; this created a vacancy in the office of "Protector" of the Crowns of

France and Spain, which he held. Each Catholic Sovereign has his "Protector" at Rome, a strange appointment where a crowned head is concerned; but the Cardinals, whose anomalous position has long been a heavy burden to their own Sovereigns, and still more so to the Church, have usurped first the reality of power, and then its outward show; and their Kings have let them do as they pleased, with a carelessness which is really astonishing. They are fond of meddling with public affairs; they like to hold profitable and dignified appointments; but the ordinary name of such appointments does not satisfy them; they must veil their functions under a majestic designation, in hopes of imposing on the vulgar, though everybody knows what it is really worth. So the Cardinal who is paid to take charge of the affairs of any country in the Consistory is called the "Protector" of that nation; so we have the Protectors of France, of Spain, etc.

The King, then, had to choose a Protector; and he cast his eyes on Cardinal Ottoboni, though there were several considerations which ought to have made him hesitate. The Cardinal was nephew to that Ottoboni whom M. de Chaulnes caused to be elected Pope, on the strength of his promises respecting the franchises, and other matters which had caused a quarrel between the King and his predecessor, Innocent XI; but he broke his promises and laughed at France, like a pantaloon as he was. One would have thought his nephew was not the man to select for an important post in a Court which always gets the better of ours; because, unlike ourselves, its policy is always continuous and steadily directed towards the same objects. Moreover, Cardinal Ottoboni was a spendthrift; and, though clever and capable, discredited by the looseness of his morals. Finally, he was a Venetian; and besides that the King had grave reasons to complain of the conduct of that republic during the war in Italy, it is notorious that the Venetian Government most jealously forbids any of its subjects to take service under a foreign Sovereign. Before accepting the nomination Ottoboni endeavoured to induce his masters at Venice to give their consent, but in vain; they refused positively, although the King himself condescended to entreat them. In the end, tempted by the offer of some rich abbeys, Ottoboni accepted; the Venetians immediately struck his name out of the Golden Book, and

forbade their Ambassador at Rome to visit him. The Abbé de Pomponne, our Ambassador at Venice, left his post, and retired to Florence, and subsequently to France, while the Venetian Ambassador at Paris was ordered to withdraw ; and left without being admitted to a farewell audience.

A very singular adventure happened about this time, which annoyed the King extremely. There was a petty lawyer at Beaune, in Burgundy, named Chavignard, who had two rather good-looking sons. They had been brought up by the Jesuits, who took them under their protection. There was formerly an ancient and illustrious family in that province called Chavigny-le-Roi, which, however, had long been extinct. These two brothers thought proper to revive it ; they gave out that they were descended from it, and that their name was really Chavigny. Backed up by the Jesuits, they came to Paris on the footing of cadets of an ancient house in search of their relations. M. de Soubise, who flattered himself that he was never duped unless he chose to be so, was really taken in on this occasion ; he believed all the Jesuits told him, was good enough to present the Chavigny brothers at Court as his relations, and procured for one of them a commission as *guidon* in the Gendarmes of the Guard. They were received everywhere in society, not only because of the name they bore, but on account of their good looks and manners. Soon afterwards the other brother was given an abbey worth from 18,000 to 20,000 livres a year. So rich an abbey was not vacant every day ; there were many unsuccessful applicants for it, and in their disappointment they made it their business to find out who this Abbé de Chavigny might be. They soon produced proofs of his imposture ; the King was so angry at being taken in that he sent to Rome to stop the Bulls ; nominated another Abbé ; ordered the brother to sell his commission as *guidon* to the Count de Pons for 60,000 livres, though he had paid 80,000 for it ; and forbade them ever to appear in his presence again.

After such an exposure any one would have supposed that they would disappear for ever ; but they took it as if nothing had happened. They obtained employment from Torey, without the King's knowledge, as spies in Holland ; and, as they were clever, especially the *guidon*, he was satisfied with their services ; they even appeared in public

during the peace conferences at Utrecht. After the King's death they made themselves useful in many ways to Cardinal Dubois, who was not ashamed to procure for the ex-Abbé an appointment as *président-à-mortier* at Besançon, where he behaved with astonishing impudence, still calling himself Chavigny. The other brother, under the name of the Chevalier de Chavigny, was employed by Cardinal Dubois in Spain, at Ratisbon, and in England; and at the present moment he is French Ambassador in Portugal, after having served as Special Envoy to Denmark. His history is known to everybody, and he is everywhere dishonoured; nevertheless, he holds his own, our Court is satisfied with him, and he is well received there when he arrives for an occasional visit. The thing seems incredible, but it is perfectly true. To put the finishing touch to it, the story of the two brothers was formerly published in *Moreri*,¹ under the heading of Chavigny-le-Roi; they have had sufficient influence to cause the publication to be forbidden in the last edition.

Two marriages in which I took great interest came off at this time. The Duke de Chevreuse, with all his ability and skill in metaphysics, had contrived to ruin himself so completely by insisting on managing his own affairs and making speculative investments that he would have had nothing to live on without his government of Guyenne. He had spent a great deal in beautifying Dampierre. He had dug a canal, at enormous cost, from his forests at Montfort and St. Léger to Mantes, in order to float his timber to the Seine; and the canal never held a pint of water. After that, he had paved roads made through the forests to get his wood out, which turned out to be quite useless; and, finally, he lost heavily by the bankruptcy of one of his customers. He wanted to find a rich wife for his grandson, the Duke de Luyne, the son of his eldest son the Duke de Montfort, although he was still very young. The bastard of the last Count de Soissons, Prince of the Blood, whom Madame de Nemours had chosen to be her heir, as I have mentioned elsewhere, had left two daughters by his marriage with the daughter of Marshal de Luxembourg. The elder had 80,000 livres a year in landed property, and her sister very nearly as much, besides jewels and other property left them by Madame de Nemours.

¹ The Burke or Debrett of that period.

The first wife of their uncle, M. de Luxembourg, had been the daughter of M. and Madame de Chevreuse, and he had always kept up his intimacy with them. He arranged a match between one of his nieces and the Duke de Luynes ; a very good marriage for him, considering the beauty and wealth of the young lady, and her birth on her mother's side.

My oldest and most intimate friend, the Duke d'Humières, married his only daughter to the eldest son of the Duke de Guiche. In consideration of this noble and rich marriage they obtained permission for the Duke de Guiche to resign his dukedom in favour of his son ; although his own father, the Duke de Grammont, who had himself resigned it in his favour, was still alive, and going about in society ; so that the same dignity of Duke and Peer passed to three successive generations of the same family, in the lifetime of the three persons who held it.

M. de Beauvilliers did a thing from which I did all I could to dissuade him ; by the King's permission he resigned his office of First Gentleman of the Chamber in favour of his son-in-law the Duke de Mortemart, in preference to his brother, the Duke de Saint-Aignan. He thought it only right to do so, as some compensation to his daughter for the wealth which he had bestowed upon his brother after the death of his sons ; but the young Duchess de Mortemart had inherited a sufficient fortune from her brothers, besides the dignity of Grandee of Spain, and I thought it was quite enough for her. But the delicate scruples of the Duke de Beauvilliers were not to be overcome. He had been greatly pleased by the way in which his son-in-law, and his sister-in-law the dowager Duchess de Mortemart, had urged him to give his property to the Duke de Saint-Aignan. This Duchess de Mortemart was, next to the Duchess de Béthune, the leading spirit of the little flock, and the best beloved of the Archbishop of Cambrai, who directed their consciences from his distant diocese. Consequently M. de Chevreuse agreed with M. de Beauvilliers ; consideration for Madame de Beauvilliers, who had lent herself in the kindest manner to his plans for his brother's benefit, had also a good deal to do with his decision. I was grieved at it, and they had reason to repent afterwards ; for it had not the effect, as they hoped, of withdrawing the Duke de Mortemart from low company and debauchery ; nor did it make his poor wife any happier, as she deserved to be.

I have spoken elsewhere of Courcillon, an original if ever there was one ; the most amusing of men, of infinite wit and cleverness, terribly debauched, and of an effrontery which stuck at nothing. He was wounded at Malplaquet ; and his leg had to be amputated above the knee, which afforded him a pretext for the most farcical jokes. Apparently the operation was badly performed, for after his return to Versailles it became necessary to cut off some more of his thigh ; and this time so high up that the operation was extremely dangerous. Dangeau, an adroit courtier, and his wife, a great favourite with Madame de Maintenon, tried to get their son to see a confessor. Their importunities teased him. He knew his father well ; to escape from them he pretended to consent to his wishes, and said that, since he must have a confessor, he would have the very best ; he begged him therefore to send for Father de la Tour, the General of the Oratory, telling him at the same time that it was useless to propose another confessor, for he was determined to have that one or none at all. Dangeau shuddered. He had lately seen what offence had been given by the visits of the same Father to the Prince of Conti and M. le Prince on their death-beds ; he dared not incur the same risk either for himself or for his son, in case the latter recovered. From that moment he never said another word about confession. That was just what Courcillon wanted, and he took care not to recur to the subject himself ; but he made some very funny stories out of it when he was well again. His cheerful disposition saved him. He was afterwards granted the odd privilege of appearing in the King's presence without hat or sword, because they got in the way of his leg. It was almost entirely made of wood, but he used to perform all sorts of buffoon's antics with it.

On Saturday, the 15th of February, the King was aroused at seven o'clock, an hour earlier than usual, because the Duchess of Burgundy was taken with the pains of childbirth. He dressed hastily and went to her rooms. She did not keep him waiting long ; at three minutes past eight she gave birth to a Duke of Anjou, who is now our reigning Sovereign, King Louis XV. The infant was immediately sprinkled by Cardinal de Janson. Madame de Saint-Simon was in the room at the time ; and it so happened that she was almost the first person to see the new-born Prince.

CHAPTER XXI

1710

Death of M. le Duc—His character—Anecdotes about him—Dispute between the King's natural daughters and the Princesses of the Blood—The Duchess of Orleans makes unfounded claims for precedence for her daughter—Madame du Maine's pretensions—The King decides these disputes—Disappointment of the Duchess of Orleans—Her pride and obstinacy—She refuses to let Mademoiselle appear in public—At last gives way reluctantly—Animosity between the Duchess of Orleans and Madame la Duchesse—The King grants distinctions to M. du Maine's children—He begs Monseigneur and the Duke of Burgundy to continue them after his death—Their cold reception of his request—I am forced, like other courtiers, to congratulate M. du Maine—My doing so misrepresented—M. du Maine's unwelcome attentions—Marriage of M. de Vendôme.

SEVERAL deaths occurred about this time. The first was that of the Duchess de Foix, who was deeply regretted by her husband and by everybody. She was Roquelaure's sister, and she sent him a message from her death-bed asking him to forgive his daughter and the Prince de Léon, which he did. Madame de Foix was the prettiest humpback imaginable ; tall, and so graceful that one really never wished her back to be straighter ; she had danced to perfection in her younger days. She did not appear much at Court, but went a good deal into society, especially where there was card-playing. She was extremely amusing, without any ill-nature ; and had the spirits of a girl of fifteen till she died at fifty-five.

Fléchier, Bishop of Nîmes, died in his diocese. He had formerly been sub-preceptor to Monseigneur, and was celebrated for his learned writings and his saintly life. Although he was very old, his death was deeply lamented throughout Languedoc, especially in his own diocese.

The death of a much greater prelate did not cause nearly so much regret, namely, that of the Archbishop of Reims, whom I have had occasion to mention several times. He was supposed to be a Jansenist ; certainly he was an enemy

of the Jesuits ; very learned in all things which concerned his order, both spiritual and temporal ; an able man, but his character was a most extraordinary mixture. Rough-mannered and haughty to the last degree, he was yet so humble with regard to his birth that he made people feel quite uncomfortable ; always in the best society, and magnificent in his expenditure, and yet a miser. As Grand Almoner he resided at Court for a part of every year, but he governed his diocese entirely himself. It was the best managed in the whole kingdom, and manned with the best clergy ; for he understood how to select them, and attach them to himself ; and he rewarded them well. He was a thorough man of the world and of the Court, and played high ; but nevertheless a good man of business. He had many friends among the most learned and saintly Bishops, and was much liked and respected in the Sorbonne, of which he was Master.

He had been asked to act as arbitrator in a dispute between the Dukes d'Aumont and d'Humières ; and was putting the finishing touch to his decision on the afternoon of the 22nd of February, after working at it since seven in the morning, when he complained to his secretary of a great pain in his head. A moment later he leant back in his chair and expired, at the age of sixty-nine. His niece, the Marquise de Créquy, arrived almost at the same moment to dine with him ; she showed no great signs of grief, although his affection for her had been such as to give rise to scandal. Besides the valuable presents which he was continually giving her, he defrayed all her household expenditure, and lived with her when he was at Paris ; to the great annoyance of his other possible heirs. When his will was opened it was discovered that, with the exception of a few special legacies, he had left his whole fortune, amounting to 2,000,000 livres, to Madame de Créquy. This will did nothing to diminish the scandal, and Madame de Créquy's insensibility was the subject of unpleasant comments.

Another death came as a shock, and at the same time as a relief, to society. M. le Duc, while thinking of nothing but his lawsuit, which was to come up for trial on the first Monday in Lent, had several slight attacks resembling epilepsy or apoplexy, which he concealed very carefully. For some time he had complained of continual and severe headaches. Madame la Princesse, for whom he had some

affection, urged him to pay attention to his health and to think of religion ; he promised to do both, but said he must put it off till after the Carnival, as he wanted to amuse himself. On the Monday before Lent he sent for Madame la Duchesse to come to Paris ; and she invited a number of guests to supper, intending that they should spend the night before Shrove Tuesday in dancing. The same evening he went to see the Duke de Bouillon and his old friend the Duke de Coislin, who was ill, taking only one footman behind his carriage and no links. As the carriage was crossing the Pont Royal, on the way back from the Hôtel de Coislin, he felt so ill that he pulled the check-string and made his footman get in beside him. He asked whether his mouth was awry, but it was not ; he then told the coachman to drive up to a side-door, so that he might not be seen by the numerous guests assembled at the Hôtel de Condé. On the road he became speechless and almost unconscious ; on arriving he was carried to bed ; doctors and priests were hastily sent for, but in vain. He gave no sign of life except horrible grimaces ; and so died, about four o'clock in the morning of Shrove Tuesday.

Madame la Duchesse, though shocked at being summoned from the midst of her brilliant crowd of guests to such a scene, lost none of her presence of mind. Although she was on bad terms with M. du Maine, she felt that she would have need of him, and sent for him to Versailles ; also for the Count de Toulouse and the Princess of Conti, their sister. An unfortunate mischance occurred with regard to the Count de Toulouse, which gave rise to a good deal of gossip and some satirical verses. He was not in when the messenger arrived, and none of his servants could or would say where he was to be found. He was not far off, however ; he was with a lady of the highest position,¹ in a fine borrowed suite of apartments, where her husband received guests all day in great state. He was a very jealous husband, but he was disabled and could not take them by surprise ; and the lady seemed to feel quite safe.

M. le Duc died before M. du Maine arrived, and the Princess of Conti carried Madame la Duchesse off to Versailles. They met M. du Maine about Chaillot, and he got into their carriage ; a little farther on they met the Count de Toulouse, who also returned to Versailles with them.

¹ The Maréchale de Villars.

Next morning they were at the King's bedside as soon as he was awake, and M. du Maine told him what had happened. The King immediately gave the Duke of Enghien his father's governorship, office, and pension; and declared that he should in future be styled M. le Duc, like his father. This Prince was seventeen years old; he showed an insensibility which gave some offence at the Hôtel de Condé.

I have had occasion to mention incidents, such as the death of the poet Santeuil, the Count de Fiesque's extraordinary adventure at St. Maur, and one or two others, which throw some light on the character of M. le Duc. In person he was extremely short—shorter than the smallest men; but, though not fat, he was very stoutly built, with an enormous head and a terrifying countenance. It was said that a dwarf belonging to Madame la Princesse was the cause of his singular appearance. His complexion was of a livid yellow; his expression almost always furious; but it was at all times so full of pride and insolence that one had great difficulty in becoming reconciled to his appearance. He was clever and well-read, and still retained some traces of an excellent education; he could be polite and even gracious when he chose, but it was very rarely that he did choose; he had neither the injustice, the avarice, nor the meanness of his forefathers, but he had all their courage, and had shown himself a zealous and capable soldier. He also had all their malignity, and their cunning in extending the prerogatives of their rank by almost imperceptible usurpations. He had come to look upon his perverted morals as a virtue, and considered the ferocious acts of vengeance, which he committed more than once, as a privilege of his exalted position; indeed it would have gone hard with any private person who had done the like. His savage temper was like a mill-stone suspended over people's heads, and made them fly from him; even his friends were not safe. Sometimes it broke out in shocking insults; sometimes in biting sarcasms or stinging lampoons, which he composed with great facility. These things made wounds which never healed; but he was often repaid with interest in the same coin. He had no real friends, only some familiar acquaintances, for the most part very strangely selected. Even these so-called friends used to shun him; to avoid being alone, which he hated, he used to run after them. If he found out that one of them was giving a dinner-party he would

drop into it as if he had come down the chimney, and scold the party for hiding themselves from him. I have seen the Bishop of Metz, M. de Castries, and others, driven wild by this habit of his.

He had much to make him suffer ; domestic troubles ; outbursts of furious jealousy, the more painful because he knew it to be useless ; the perpetual alternation between ardent love for his wife and raging hatred for her ; the intolerable constraint imposed upon him by his fear of the King ; jealousy of the preference given to the Prince of Conti even by his own father ; rage at the universal affection and esteem shown for that Prince, combined with the bitter consciousness that he himself was shunned by the public and hated by his own family,—these feelings were so many Furies which tortured him unceasingly, and made him as savage as a wild beast which lives only by devouring and preying on the human race. He took a delight in storming at people and insulting them ; such outbursts had become habitual, and his intense pride found some amusement in them. No one who knew this Prince will think this description of him over-coloured. There was not a single person who did not regard his death as a relief and a blessing to the world.

I heard of M. le Duc's death as soon as I was awake. After the King's Mass I went to see the Duke of Orleans ; he led me into his private room where the Duchess was sitting, waiting till he had got rid of people who came to pay ceremonial visits on this occasion. When we were alone together they told me what had passed that morning between them and Madame la Duchesse, and also between the King and the Duke of Orleans regarding the dispute between his daughters and the Princesses of the Blood. This is a matter to which I have only made a brief allusion in passing ; I must now explain it more fully.

I must begin by saying that the whole world probably did not contain a prouder person than the Duchess of Orleans. Considering her birth, she ought to have been satisfied with finding herself in a position exalted so far above that of her sisters ; but the thought that her rank of Granddaughter of France ended with her, and that her children would be merely Princes of the Blood, was intolerable ; and she took it into her head to obtain recognition for another rank, intermediate between the Crown and the Princes of the

Blood, namely, that of a Great-Grandchild of France. The Duke of Orleans thought this pretension absurd, but with his usual careless, easy-going disposition he allowed it to be put forward, although he disapproved ; and in the end he was drawn on till he gave it his active support. The Duke of Chartres was a child, and there was no question of any pretensions with regard to him ; but their eldest daughter was nearly of an age to be presented and introduced into society, and she looked older than she really was. The Duchess of Orleans began her operations by trying to usurp precedence for her daughter over the wives and daughters of the Princes of the Blood. So far as their daughters were concerned there was no difficulty, since the House of Orleans was undoubtedly the eldest branch of the Royal Family ; but in all classes of society, among persons of equal rank, the invariable rule was for married women to go before girls ; and this rule had always been observed among the Princes of the Blood, no matter what branch they belonged to. The Duchess of Orleans therefore thought it advisable to proceed cautiously.

Since the marriage of the Duchess of Lorraine there had been no "Mademoiselle." The Duchess of Orleans began by having her daughter called so at the Palais-Royal ; the custom soon spread to the Court ; as the King took no notice, it became established ; and the Duchess of Orleans would have been highly offended if any one had spoken of her daughter otherwise than as "Mademoiselle." In the meantime, the delay in presenting Mademoiselle at Court, and rumours of some trifling but significant marks of respect shown to her at the Palais-Royal, aroused the suspicions of the Princes of the Blood ; though they said nothing they were on their guard. About this time there were some marriage contracts of private persons witnessed by members of the Royal Family. Mademoiselle, though she had not yet been presented, was old enough to sign them with the rest ; but her mother would not allow her to sign after the wives of the Princes of the Blood, who were very angry about it. The end of it was that Mademoiselle, to avoid giving way, did not sign the contracts at all ; and in this way the pretensions of the Duchess of Orleans became known. There was a bitter quarrel between her and Madame la Duchesse ; petitions and counter-petitions were sent to the King, who put off giving a decision, knowing

that he must offend one party or the other ; and it was while the matter was in this position that M. le Duc died.

There was another dispute about precedence in the House of Condé. Madame du Maine, though she retained her rank as a Princess of the Blood, had never applied for a warrant to enable her to do so, such as had been granted to Madame de Longueville and other Princesses of the Blood who had married gentlemen of inferior rank. She wanted to make out that her husband was himself a Prince of the Blood, and thereby claim the precedence of a married, instead of an unmarried, Princess. So long as there were no unmarried Princesses in society this pretension passed unnoticed ; but when Madame la Duchesse presented her two daughters it could not be concealed much longer. Madame du Maine was in the habit of coming to Court very rarely, spending nearly all her time at Sceaux, and so kept out of their way for a time ; but the same marriage contracts revealed her designs. She did not venture openly to claim the rank of Prince of the Blood for M. du Maine ; but asserted that, as M. le Duc's sister, she ought to sign before his daughters, being senior to them in the family. The pretension was absurd, and in the end she did not sign the contracts at all.

Up to this time I had heard very little about Made-moiselle's claims ; for most of these occurrences took place before I made the acquaintance of the Duchess of Orleans, and her husband cared so little about the affair that he had hardly mentioned it to me. On the morning after the death of M. le Duc, however, they both took me into their confidence, and the Duke of Orleans told me that he had that morning asked the King to take this opportunity of restoring peace to the family by settling the dispute. The King had seemed to be impressed by his arguments, but warned him that he should very likely decide against him ; to which he had replied by asking him once more to give a decision one way or the other. We talked the matter over. I thought it was to their advantage to have it settled ; and, notwithstanding what the King had said to the Duke of Orleans, I was of opinion that he would not decide against him ; in which, as it turned out, I was completely mistaken. We agreed that the Duke of Orleans should write to Madame de Maintenon, in order to put her in a good humour ; and after dinner we composed the letter together, I acting as

secretary. The Duke of Orleans afterwards wrote it out to my dictation, and it was sent off at once.

After Mass the King had been to see Madame la Duchesse, who was in bed, making a most correct display of grief ; and had urged her not to let slip this opportunity of putting an end to the ill-feeling between the Duchess of Orleans and herself. Their quarrels grieved him ; and he flattered himself that the polite attentions shown by both parties on this occasion sprang from a real desire for a reconciliation, though in reality they were merely the result of conformity with the established usages of society. With his mind set on this object he went in the evening to the Duchess of Burgundy's room, as he had been in the habit of doing since her confinement ; and, contrary to his usual custom, caused every one to leave the room except Madame de Maintenon, Monseigneur, and the Duke of Burgundy ; at the same time he sent for the Duke of Berry. He then explained the matter in dispute, mentioning what the Duke of Orleans had said to him that morning, and his letter to Madame de Maintenon ; and they all agreed that the question had better be decided. The King's mind was full of a memorial which M. le Duc had given him a few days before. He had offered to show it to the Duke of Orleans, so that he might reply to the arguments contained in it ; but that Prince, in his usual easy-going way, thought it could be nothing but a repetition of what had been said already, and declined the offer, on the ground that he had already stated his case and had nothing further to add to it. Nevertheless, it was this memorial which finally decided the King against Mademoiselle's pretensions. He could not refrain from letting the others see what his opinion was ; leaving them, however, complete liberty to vote as they pleased, for in reality he cared little which of his two bastard daughters got the best of it.

Monseigneur, who was fond of Madame la Duchesse and detested the Duke of Orleans, expressed himself strongly in favour of the wives of the Princes of the Blood ; the Duke of Burgundy was of the same opinion ; and, as may readily be supposed, the Duke of Berry did not take upon himself to contradict them. It was therefore decided that unmarried Daughters of France should take precedence of the wives of their younger brothers, but that the wives of Princes of the Blood should rank before the unmarried

daughters of Grandsons of France. After this, Madame du Maine's affair was discussed ; and with regard to this it was decided that unmarried Princesses of the Blood should take precedence among themselves according to their seniority ; which put an end to Madame du Maine's claim to rank, as their aunt, before the unmarried daughters of the late M. le Duc.

It was further decided that Princesses of the Blood who married a man below them in rank should not retain their own rank without a special patent to enable them to do so. Accordingly, all Madame du Maine's claims on behalf of her husband fell to the ground ; for, though he enjoyed all the privileges of a Prince of the Blood, he was not one in reality ; she was accorded the rank which properly belonged to her, namely that of an unmarried Princess of the Blood, taking precedence below her nieces. The King said he would cause a patent to be made out to enable her to retain her rank, in case she had not one already. These questions having been settled unanimously, the King requested that the decision might be kept secret till after his supper.

In order to give a clear idea of what took place, I must briefly describe the daily routine of the hour after the King's supper. When he left the table he always paused in the first of his rooms, where he used to stand for five or six minutes, leaning his back against the balustrade. There he found a circle awaiting him, consisting of all the ladies who had been present at his supper ; they used to leave the supper-room a few minutes before he rose from the table, and went before him into the next room. The ladies who had been seated, however, did not leave the supper-room till after him ; they followed the Princes and Princesses who had supped with him, and came one by one to make a curtsy to him ; after this they joined the circle which was standing round. The other ladies always left a large space clear for them, and all the men stood behind. The King used to amuse himself by looking at the ladies' dresses, and observing the varying degrees of elegance with which they make their curtsies. After this he bowed to the ladies on his right and left with infinite grace and dignity, and went into his first private room, sometimes, but very rarely, saying a few words to one of the ladies in passing. He stopped in this room to give out the parole and countersign, and then passed on into his second private room, all the

doors being left open. There he sat down in an arm-chair; Madame, the Duchess of Burgundy, his three daughters, and Madame du Maine, when she happened to be there, being seated on *tabourets* to his right and left. Monseigneur, the Dukes of Burgundy, Berry, and Orleans, and the two bastards were there, all standing; as were M. le Duc, while he lived, the two sons of M. du Maine when they were old enough, and d'Antin, after he became Superintendent of Buildings. M. d'O, Chamaranade, the four First Valets de Chambre, and the principal valets of the households of Monseigneur and his sons were assembled in the dogs' room, which opened into the room where the King was; though a few of them used to remain in the first private room with the Ladies of Honour and the two Ladies of the Palace in attendance on the Duchess of Burgundy. The doors were all open, so that everything which went on in the King's room could be seen and overheard from the dogs' room and the first private room. The same routine went on wherever the Court was, except that at Fontainebleau, where there was only one very large private room, the Ladies of Honour who were Duchesses sat on *tabourets* in the same circle as the Princesses; the other ladies stood or sat on the floor, and the valets from motives of discretion, kept away, except a very few.

This evening the King, on entering the second room, called the Duke and Duchess of Orleans and the Count de Toulouse to him, and, instead of sitting down as usual, went into a corner of the room, where he told them what had been decided. The Duke of Orleans, who was incapable of taking things much to heart, and had never really cared about this affair, was quite satisfied; but the Duchess answered not a word. The King, accompanied by the Count de Toulouse, then went to another part of the room, and called up M. and Madame du Maine, who seemed rather disgusted at the decision respecting them. After this the King sat down as usual, and the time dragged on rather heavily till the hour arrived for his *coucher*.

Next day, as I was going into the Duke of Orleans' room, I saw him coming out of the King's room; I waited for him, and asked how matters stood. "The case has been decided against us," he whispered, and then, taking me by the arm, he added: "Come in, and see the Duchess." I thought she must be very much put out, and did not wish to go

with him ; but he pulled me along. We found her in the recess of her little dark room opening on to the Gallery, some coffee on a table in front of her. As soon as she saw me her tears, which were hardly dry, began to flow again. I stopped at the door, intending to slip away quietly, but she called me in and made me sit down. We condoled with each other, and she then showed me a letter which she had just written to Madame de Maintenon, telling her all her troubles, and begging that an engagement between Mademoiselle and the Duke of Berry might be arranged and given out at once ; even if it were thought better that the marriage should be postponed for a time. I never saw a letter so well written ; the writer expressed herself forcibly, with much simple and natural eloquence, yet with great tact and delicacy. The Duke of Orleans told me all the details of the decision, adding that he had just said a word to the King on the subject of Mademoiselle's marriage, telling him that it would console him for any disappointment ; whereupon the King merely replied, very drily and with a sarcastic smile : " I should think it would ! " This put the finishing touch to our affliction.

The Duchess of Orleans gave out that she had a headache, and would see no one, not even Mademoiselle, except for a few minutes in the evening ; after which she sent her away, and made her keep to her room. Next day she went away to St. Cloud, to avoid people, and it was three days before she would see Madame la Duchesse. She was in such a state of grief that everybody noticed it ; she could not be induced to listen to advice or to put any constraint on her feelings. Besides her natural annoyance at seeing Madame la Duchesse triumph over her, she had another motive for vexation which she could not avow openly : all her schemes for her children were overthrown ; their position, to her intense disgust, was irrevocably fixed on a par with that of the other Princes of the Blood, with nothing to distinguish them in any way. She determined to sulk, to avoid seeing the King as far as possible, and to keep Mademoiselle in the background ; meaning, as she said, to make the King feel uncomfortable and force him to consent to the desired marriage. The Duke of Orleans, who did not take the matter so much to heart, and was for once much more sensible than she was, did his best to make her listen to reason ; but he had to let her have her own way for a time.

It was Lent, and the King went three times a week to hear a sermon. On these occasions all the Princesses were in attendance in their proper rank; the Duchess of Orleans was therefore determined that Mademoiselle should not go. To avoid it, she paid a visit to Paris, where she had the pleasure, for the first time in her life, of presiding over a Court of her own at the Palais-Royal. Her triumph was complete; the Court of the Duke of Orleans, which had paid no attention to her before the dismissal of Madame d'Argenton, was at her feet; and her rooms were crowded with the most distinguished society of Paris. She was delighted, and often told me how grateful she felt for the service I had rendered her. It would not have been etiquette for them to go to the Opera publicly, so soon after the death of M. le Duc; and this procured her a fresh triumph, for she went to the little private box which had been fitted up purposely for Madame d'Argenton. She and the Duke of Orleans made me go there with them.

After a week of this pomp they returned to Versailles. The Duchess had not become more tractable in the meantime; the Duchess de Villeroy remonstrated with her in vain; and even the Duchess of Burgundy failed to get her to listen to reason, though she spoke to her with much affectionate tact. She was sorry for her failure; for she saw that the Duchess of Orleans was going the right way to spoil all chances of a marriage between Mademoiselle and the Duke of Berry; and, for reasons which will appear later on, she was anxious that this marriage should take place. The Duchess of Orleans was determined that Mademoiselle should not come out till after Easter, when there would be no more public functions at which the Princesses had to appear in order of precedence. Her husband, who disapproved strongly of her conduct, spoke to her about it one day in my presence, and lost his temper—a very unusual thing with him—to such a degree that he reminded her of her birth in a manner which gave her great pain, and made me feel extremely uncomfortable. I escaped as soon as I could, and took refuge in the Duke of Orleans' private room; he joined me there soon afterwards, still angry, and, as I was angry too, I took the liberty of speaking my mind to him pretty freely.

I was obliged to see the Duchess next morning, as we had some things to talk over. She brought up what her

husband had said on the previous day, and I told her how I had scolded him. A few days afterwards, M. de Beauvilliers, who was warmly interested in the proposed marriage, stopped me in the Gallery to tell me how very important it was that Mademoiselle should make her appearance in public ; he said he knew, as a fact, that the obstinacy of the Duchess of Orleans was beginning to give offence to the King and Madame de Maintenon, and begged me to remonstrate with her without a moment's delay. I told him it was useless, that the Duchess of Burgundy had tried and failed, and that I should only make myself disliked ; but he insisted ; and I went straight off to obey his instructions. The Duchess of Orleans heard me out without saying a word ; thanked me coldly, and told me, with a vexation which her politeness tried in vain to conceal, that her determination was not to be shaken.

Three or four days after this the Duchess of Burgundy sent for Mademoiselle herself, explained to her with real motherly kindness, how her prospects were being ruined, and begged her to use her utmost efforts to persuade her mother to let her appear in public. This last appeal succeeded. I was astonished, at the very next sermon, to see Mademoiselle in full dress and in her proper place among the Princesses. The same day the Duke of Orleans took me in to see the Duchess. We found her in bed, in floods of tears ; and she never left off weeping all day. She would not see Mademoiselle till she had changed her things, and it was a long time before she could bear to see her in full dress. Nevertheless, she took her with her to present her to the royal personages, after which she sent her to call on the Princesses of the Blood. Madame la Duchesse was good enough to devour her with kisses ; the Princess of Conti treated her with polite playfulness. After this, to have the merit of yielding gracefully to the King's wishes, Mademoiselle appeared in public from time to time. Thus the decision which the King had given, in hopes of putting an end to the quarrel between his daughters, had the effect of making them more bitter than ever ; and their rivalry for the marriage of the Duke of Berry soon raised their animosity to the highest pitch. I shall so often have occasion to speak of the Duchess of Orleans that I have thought it worth while to dwell on these trifles, for they give a better insight into her character than any words of mine could do.

On M. le Duc's body being examined, it was discovered that he had a sort of excrescence or tumour in his head, which, having grown to a certain size, had caused his death. The King ordained that the funeral should be conducted with much less pomp than that of M. le Prince, who had enjoyed the dignity of senior Prince of the Blood. The body was taken without ceremony to Valery, where M. le Duc awaited it alone, having slept the previous night at St. Ange, Caumartin's curious and beautiful house. The late M. le Duc had himself slept there less than a year before, on his way to perform the last duties to his father. On his return the King placed M. le Duc under d'Antin's guardianship with regard to the management of his property; d'Antin was also ordered to keep an eye on his behaviour.

Madame la Duchesse had relapsed into a state of affliction which astonished everybody. She told her intimate friends that M. le Duc's conduct towards her had undergone a great change of late; to others, less intimate, she confessed that she had lost him at a most inconvenient time, considering the embarrassed state of her affairs; and said she did not know which way to turn. She had received a dowry of a million, quantities of jewels, and a pension of 25,000 livres; and yet she declared she had not enough to live on. We shall see hereafter how prodigiously she and her family contrived to enrich themselves.¹ With her tearful ways she managed to extract from the King an additional pension of 30,000 crowns; but he gave it very reluctantly. Monseigneur, in great delight, went to tell her the good news; then her tears ceased to flow, and her cheerful humour returned. She received ceremonial visits from everybody, lying on her bed in her widow's dress, edged and lined with ermine, like that of widowed Duchesses; and, like them, wearing a headdress of plain linen falling over the shoulders, and very long; but not so long as the ermine train of the dress. No lady under the rank of Duchess has a right to either. The length of the train is proportioned to that of the headdress; the Queen's train is eleven yards long; that of Daughters of France, nine; of Grand-daughters of France, seven; of Princesses of the Blood, five; of Duchesses, three. M. le Duc, wearing a mourning-cloak, also received ceremonial visits in the rooms of his late father. There were

¹ She and her son, M. le Duc, were said to have made 250,000,000 livres (£10,000,000) by skilful speculation in Law's "Mississippi" schemes.

piles of cloaks and mantles at the doors, and no one was excused from wearing them. Both men and ladies wore them with the same ostentatious contempt which had been shown after the death of M. le Prince ; but neither M. le Duc nor Madame la Duchesse appeared to notice it. M. le Duc received everybody standing, and reconducted all Dukes and foreign Princes, with punctilious exactness, to the very end of his apartments.

Since the affair of Madame de Lussan I had had no reason to complain of Madame la Duchesse. She had made very polite advances to Madame de Saint-Simon when we kept aloof from her ; and they had redoubled when we paid her a ceremonial visit after the death of M. le Prince. She had nothing to do with M. le Duc's attack on me in my absence about the affair of the mourning-cloaks. We thought, therefore, that we would consider M. le Duc solely responsible for the unpleasantness which had arisen, and we asked Madame de Laigle to tell Madame la Duchesse, with suitable expressions of respect, that it was only on his account that we had not called on her after her last confinement. Madame de Laigle was the daughter of M. de Raré, who had always been on most friendly terms with my father and uncle ; her husband had also been a friend of my father's, and his neighbour at La Ferté. She herself was a great friend of ours, and a clever, sensible woman, much respected. She was delighted at being entrusted with such a commission. The result of it was that we went to call on Madame la Duchesse, who seemed much gratified. After this we always called on her on ceremonial occasions ; and Madame de Saint-Simon sometimes, but very rarely, saw her in private. She never gave us any further ground for complaint.

M. du Maine was very much annoyed at the King's decision respecting the Princesses of the Blood ; for it put an end to the scheme which his wife had so adroitly contrived for him to become a Prince of the Blood himself. It occurred to him that this would be a favourable opportunity to work upon the King's feelings, and obtain for his children the same rank and honours as had been granted to himself. There was nobody to oppose his designs ; the Princes of the Blood were all children, the eldest being only seventeen ; the Duke of Orleans was perfectly indifferent to such matters, and his wife had the interests of bastardy even more at heart

than M. du Maine himself. None of the Sons of France dared remonstrate, Monseigneur least of all ; and the only public opinion to be reckoned with was that of a crowd of courtiers, in whom the last spark of independence had long been stamped out, accustomed to vie with each other in mean flattery and base compliances. His chief reliance was on Madame de Maintenon, who had brought him up, for whose sake he had sacrificed Madame de Montespan, and who loved him with a love passing that of a girl for her sweetheart, or of a wet-nurse for her nursling. It was by her assistance that he had emerged from the condition of a nameless bastard and risen to his present grandeur ; and Madame Scarron, having herself risen till she had become a Queen, looked upon his elevation as only proper, and in the natural order of things. She entered readily into his scheme for the elevation of his children, and was easily convinced that nothing was required but an expression of the King's will.

Weak as the King was where his bastards were concerned, and especially the Duke du Maine, it must be observed that, except in the matter of his daughters' marriages and the gift of Governorships and other official positions to his sons, he had never yet done anything for them formally. Their elevation had been brought about gradually, by almost imperceptible encroachments, which insensibly obtained the sanction of long-established habit and custom ; and, moreover, each step in advance carried him a little farther than he had intended to go. By sheer force of custom his sons had acquired all the external privileges of Princes of the Blood within the Court ; afterwards he gave them the same position when serving with the army ; and, lastly, induced the Ambassadors of Foreign Powers to recognise it, though not till after a long struggle, which is indeed still maintained by the Papal Nuncios. But in all this nothing had ever been set down formally in writing, and the King's remarks to M. du Maine on the occasion of his marriage, and to Marshal Tessé on his departure for Italy, where he would come in contact with M. de Vendôme as Commander-in-Chief, show clearly that each concession was extorted from him against his better judgement. On this occasion it was the old story over again ; the King saw the impropriety of the proposal submitted to him ; he resisted it as long as he could, and was finally led to consent to it against his will.

The struggle did not last very long ; it began after the 4th of March, the day on which M. le Duc died, and the decision was given in favour of the Princesses of the Blood, and it was terminated on the 16th by the complete victory of M. du Maine.

The announcement of the King's decision led to a scene which, to any one who knew him and his overpowering sense of his own authority, must appear one of the most striking and singular of his long reign. After supper on the 19th of March he went into his second room as usual, but did not sit down. Casting his eyes round the assembled company, he said, without addressing himself to any one in particular, that he granted to M. du Maine's children the same rank and honours which their father enjoyed ; after which he walked to the farthest end of the room, and called Monseigneur and the Duke of Burgundy to him. Then, for the first time in his life, this proud King, this severe and masterful father, humbled himself before his son and grandson. He said that, as they were both destined to reign after him, he begged them to approve of what he had done for M. du Maine's children ; he asked it as a pledge of the affection which he flattered himself they felt for him, and as a concession to his own weakness for these children ; he asked it the more urgently because he was old, and felt that he had not much longer to live ; and he hoped that when he was gone they would watch over the interests of his grandchildren as a mark of respect for his memory. The two Princes, somewhat moved by this address, stood side by side stupefied with astonishment, not so much at the request itself, as at the manner in which it was made ; they replied not a word.

The King had expected a more gracious answer, and seemed determined to extract one ; he called for M. du Maine from the far end of the room, where a profound silence reigned. The King laid his hands on his shoulders and, pressing heavily on them to make him bow profoundly, presented him to the two Princes ; told them again that he trusted to their kind hearts, and their affection for himself, to protect M. du Maine after his death, and wound up by asking them to promise to do so. The two Princes looked at each other without saying a word, hardly knowing whether the whole scene was not a dream ; the King again pressed them, and they stammered out some vague reply ; M. du Maine, feeling confused and embarrassed, was about to

embrace their knees when the King, his eyes full of tears, begged them to embrace him in his presence, as an assurance of their good-will. He again urged them to promise not to annul the rank which he had just granted. The two Princes, still bewildered by this extraordinary scene, made some sort of answer, but gave no definite promise.

All this was told me word for word by M. de Beauvilliers, who had it next morning from the Duke of Burgundy. It also became known through Monseigneur, who related it to his intimates, and did not conceal how much he was displeased by what the King had done. He had never liked M. du Maine ; he had always been hurt by the King's preference for him ; and there had been times in their younger days when M. du Maine, though not exactly disrespectful, had not treated him with much deference ; his conduct in this respect contrasted unfavourably with that of the Count de Toulouse, who had won Monseigneur's affection. As for the poor Duke of Burgundy, I soon found out what he thought about the affair. The two Princes took no trouble to disguise their sentiments ; and in this they made a great mistake.

After his last vain attempt to extract a promise from them the King saw that he must give it up ; he gave no outward sign of displeasure, but returned to his arm-chair. As soon as he was seated he said he hoped every one would show his satisfaction by congratulating M. du Maine on the honour just conferred on his family. All in the room at once complied with this request ; but even the Count de Toulouse offered his congratulations with a rather serious air ; though the privileges granted to his brother concerned himself also, he was as much taken by surprise as any one. The difference in their ages, and M. du Maine's greater ability, gave him a marked superiority over M. de Toulouse, and there was not much union between the brothers ; they seldom saw each other in private ; appearances were kept up, but there was little affection and no mutual confidence between them. The conduct of the Duchess of Maine was intolerable to the straightforward good sense of the Count de Toulouse ; she perceived it, and did her best to keep him away from her husband, for he did not approve of M. du Maine's boundless complaisance for her—a complaisance which did not save him from open manifestations of her pride.

The news became public next day. The only official

notice of what the King had done was a simple note in the register of the Master of Ceremonies, the Grand Master being absent with the army on the frontier. It ran as follows : " The King, being at Versailles, has ordained that in future the children of the Duke of Maine shall, as grandchildren of His Majesty, have the same rank, honours, and privileges as have heretofore been enjoyed by the said Duke of Maine ; and His Majesty has ordered me to make this note in my register." This says a good deal, and at the same time says nothing definite ; it mentions the honours enjoyed by M. du Maine, but makes no attempt to define them. The significance of the note lies in the mention of his children as grandchildren of His Majesty, without qualification.

The announcement was received by the public with dull surprise and dissatisfaction ; people had not yet become reconciled to M. du Maine's own honours, and now they saw them passed on to his children. No one at Court dared speak his mind openly about it ; but the matter was discussed in whispers, and no one expressed approval. Nevertheless, when it became known that the King wished M. du Maine to be congratulated nobody ventured to stand aloof. I had only lately made my peace with the King, and he had warned me to be very careful in all matters affecting my dignity. This dignity was grievously injured by what the King had done ; and I had never called to congratulate the bastards on any of the previous honours lavished upon them. But I saw Dukes, foreign Princes, and men of all ranks going there ; I saw that to hold aloof would make me a marked man and ruin me more completely than ever ; so I resolved to drain the cup to the dregs. I went, like the others ; but all I could bring myself to do was to make a formal bow to M. and Madame du Maine, and pass on at once. So many people were crowding round them that they hardly knew which way to turn, and while they were exchanging compliments with some, others were taking their departure ; and I slipped away.

Servility and fear of the King's displeasure made people go to congratulate the Count de Toulouse ; the same considerations which forced me to go to M. du Maine's rooms induced me to call on his brother also. He was not at home ; but, as I was crossing the little Marble Court, I met d'O, and asked him to tell the Count de Toulouse that I

had called to congratulate him. "May I ask what you congratulate him about?" said d'O, with his usual air of frigid self-importance. I replied that the honour conferred on M. du Maine concerned his brother sufficiently for him to be pleased at it. "What!" said d'O, with a frown, "pleased to think that henceforth he will rank below M. du Maine's children!" In my astonishment, I said it seemed to me that what the Count de Toulouse gained for his own children was sufficient to reconcile him to walking behind his nephews. Then d'O, coming close up to me, and looking at me with the air of a man who has an important declaration to make: "Let me assure you," he said, "that the Count de Toulouse has no share in what has been done for M. du Maine. He has no children, and no ambitious views for any he may have hereafter; he is satisfied with his present rank, and wishes for nothing more!"

I left him, surprised beyond measure. He was a man whom I hardly ever saw; a scornful Pharisee who talked in monosyllables; and yet, as it seemed to me, he had eagerly seized this opportunity to make this astonishing statement, which was perfectly uncalled-for so far as I was concerned. The Duke and Duchess de Villeroy, to whom I told the story immediately, were friends of M. and Madame d'O. They accounted for d'O's conduct by saying that the Count de Toulouse had done all he could to prevent his brother from accepting the proffered dignity for his children; perhaps foreseeing that such a display of ambition might one day endanger their own position. It is certain that this affair caused a marked coldness between them. I am not sure, however, that this explanation was the right one; I believe the Count de Toulouse simply wished to wash his hands of the whole affair, and leave his brother to bear the burden of the unpopularity arising from it.

It was not long before the sentiments of Monseigneur and the Duke of Burgundy became known, for they committed the great mistake of expressing them openly. The poor Duchess of Burgundy went so far as to declare that the rank granted to the Duke of Maine's children would not continue under Monseigneur when he came to the throne; and most certainly not under herself and her husband. Emboldened by the support of such powerful allies, the Court, which had been almost suffocated by the restraint imposed upon it, broke out into open murmurs; and people

expressed their opinions with great force and licence. The King took too much trouble to make himself acquainted with the most trifling occurrences to remain long in ignorance of this deluge of talk, or of the sentiments expressed by Monseigneur and the Duke of Burgundy, in spite of his appeals to them. He became gloomy, and repented what he had done ; he was even on the point of cancelling it. M. du Maine and Madame de Maintenon trembled, and did their best to reassure him ; vaunting the eagerness and unanimity with which the courtiers had hastened to offer their congratulations.

The day after my visits to the bastards Madame de Nogaret asked me to go to her, as she had something to tell me. To my great surprise, she said the Duchess of Burgundy had asked her to find out from me how I came to be so intimate with the Duke of Maine, and what I thought of the rank granted to his children. I inquired in my turn what had put the notion of such an intimacy into the Duchess of Burgundy's head, and why she should have any doubt about my sentiments. Madame de Nogaret then told me that on the previous evening the King and Madame de Maintenon had been sitting by the bedside of the Duchess of Burgundy, and Madame de Maintenon had been employing all her arts to make her think more favourably of what had been done, telling her of the crowds who had flocked to congratulate M. du Maine, adding that even M. de Saint-Simon had hastened to do so. The King asked her if she was sure of that ; whereupon she repeated what she had said, assuring him that she had it from M. du Maine himself. The King seemed much pleased, and, turning to the Duchess of Burgundy, said, as if trying to encourage himself, that since that man approved of what had been done there could be no great objection to it. I smiled bitterly at the thought of my name being prostituted in this way to justify an act so degrading for all Frenchmen. I told Madame de Nogaret about my conversation with the Duchess of Orleans, on the subject of the lawsuit between M. du Maine and the heirs of M. le Prince ; assured her that the rank conferred on him was odious to me, and that given to his children still more so ; and I explained the reasons which had forced me to call on M. du Maine ; though, whatever the King might think, I had not opened my mouth on that occasion. I begged Madame de Nogaret to repeat our conversation to

the Duchess of Burgundy ; who, as I heard afterwards, was much pleased, and glad to think that she had not mistaken my sentiments about this affair.

The Duke du Maine lost no time in persuading the King to grant him further favours, by way of showing that he did not repent of what he had already done. Five weeks later—that is, on the 14th of April, M. du Maine was granted the reversion of his office of Colonel of the Swiss Guards for his eldest son, the Prince de Dombes, who was ten years old ; and that of the Grand-Mastership of the Artillery for the Count d'Eu, who was only six. There was a renewal of the murmurs and expressions of indignation, but no diminution of servility ; the whole Court went to congratulate M. and Madame du Maine, who had just been given the fine suite of apartments occupied by the late Archbishop of Reims. This in itself was an unprecedented favour ; for none of the Princes of the Blood, nor any of Monsieur's children, had been given apartments in the *château* till they had reached a much more advanced age.

I did like the rest ; I went one morning to call on M. du Maine, intending, as before, merely to show myself, and retire immediately. I found him surrounded by prelates from the Assembly of the Clergy, and as soon as I had made my appearance I withdrew. M. du Maine immediately asked the prelates to excuse him for a moment, and came limping towards me ; his servants drew my attention to him, and, as there was no getting out of it, I went back. He led me to the fireplace at the far end of the room, the rest of the company going away and leaving us alone. He then said that he had long been seeking an opportunity to thank me for the kind answer I had given the Duchess of Orleans about his lawsuit, for which he should always feel grateful. He assured me that he had always regarded me with the highest esteem, and desired the honour of my friendship—sentiments which, he said, were shared by Madame du Maine. He added that he wished we could sometimes see each other privately, without constraint ; and then, changing the subject, he began telling me of the high esteem in which Madame de Saint-Simon was held by his wife and himself, speaking of her in terms so forcible, so copious, and so extraordinarily polite, that I did not know what to reply, and at one time thought he would never give me a chance of doing so. I did my best, however,

assuring him that I should never forget the kindness shown me by himself and Madame du Maine at the time of my affair with Madame de Lussan. I thought that was sufficient, and attempted to withdraw; but he again began singing the praises of Madame de Saint-Simon, and assuring me how highly honoured he and Madame du Maine would think themselves by the friendship of a person like her. He added that he had been so anxious to express his sentiments that he had begged the Duchess of Orleans to do so on his behalf, till he should have an opportunity of speaking to me himself. She had not done so; either because she forgot it, or because when she first spoke to me on the subject she had perceived clearly that we wished for neither intercourse nor friendship with M. du Maine.

I had the utmost difficulty in getting away from M. du Maine; I only managed it by dint of polite and complimentary speeches, though I was most careful not to commit myself to any promises of friendship. When I at last took my leave I was overwhelmed with the most gracious and flattering attentions. I avoided those which I thought the Duchesse du Maine was preparing for me; she was surrounded by a crowd of people, and, though she wanted me to go up to her, I excused myself on the ground that I should disturb the ladies, and immediately took my departure. Madame de Saint-Simon found M. and Madame du Maine together, and they vied with each other in making the most polite and embarrassing overtures to her. She got out of it as I had done, with a good deal of trouble; and we saw plainly that they did not intend to drop their extraordinary and persistent design of making friends with us. But we were determined to keep to our old resolutions concerning them, and I saw no more of them than I had done before; that is, I called on them only if there had been a death in their family, or on similar occasions when a visit was indispensable. Madame de Saint-Simon saw little more of them than I did. It will be seen, later on, that it is not without good reason that I have said so much about these passing advances on the part of the Duke and Duchess of Maine. Their rank was already sufficiently odious to me, and this scandalous extension of it to their children was not likely to make me feel more kindly disposed towards them.

These months of March and April were fortunate for the

bastards. The Spanish Government again sent urgent requests that Vendôme might be allowed to take command of their army ; and, as he was very solitary at Anet, and had no hope of recovering his position in this country, he was very anxious to go. In the meantime, seeing himself delivered from M. le Prince and M. le Duc, he hoped to meet with no further opposition to his marriage with Mademoiselle d'Enghien. M. and Madame du Maine had put it into her head, but they had not been able to bring it about while M. le Prince and M. le Duc were alive. She was thirty-three years old, and extremely ugly ¹ ; her life had been spent at the Hôtel de Condé, in the most cruel constraint ; and to escape from it she was ready to marry any one. M. le Prince's death put an end to the constraint, but she still suffered from ennui in the company of Madame la Princesse, and there was no way of leaving her house except by marriage. M. de Vendôme, though he had never intended to marry, was attracted by the honour of becoming M. le Prince's son-in-law, and much offended that M. le Prince would not accept him in that capacity. M. le Duc also opposed the marriage ; now that both were gone, M. de Vendôme was anxious to arrange it without delay. M. du Maine took it in hand, and the King gave his consent on the 26th of April.

If nothing but ambition could have persuaded M. de Vendôme to marry Mademoiselle d'Enghien, she must certainly have possessed great courage to accept a man like M. de Vendôme, with only half a nose, after the most skilful physicians had twice failed to cure him. However, they were both quite satisfied ; she obtained wealth and freedom, and his vanity was gratified by being able to show people that, in spite of his downfall, he was still enough of a great man to marry a Princess of the Blood. He bought her by making over the whole of his property to her by the marriage contract, in case he died before her without children, as seemed probable, and as it turned out eventually. Madame la Princesse only heard of the proposed marriage from M. du Maine, after the King had given his consent. She wept bitterly, and complained of the slight to M. le Prince's memory ; but she could do nothing, so she let the affair go on without taking any part in it whatever.

¹ She was very short, fat, and apoplectic-looking ; moreover, much disfigured by small-pox.

M. du Maine arranged everything : the marriage contract, the publication of the banns, and the wedding itself. The way in which everything was done showed how low M. de Vendôme had fallen. He had great difficulty in obtaining an audience of the King ; it was granted only on condition that he kept to his room the whole time he was at Versailles, and saw nobody. He was not allowed to come there for the signing of the marriage contract ; and the King insisted on the wedding taking place quite quietly at Sceaux, while the Court was away at Marly. M. de Vendôme went straight from Anet to Sceaux on the 15th of May, and the same evening he and Mademoiselle d'Enghien were betrothed, wedded, and bedded, only Madame la Princesse, M. le Duc and his brother, the Count de Charolais, the Princess of Conti, and M. and Madame du Maine being present, with their children.

M. de Vendôme remained at Sceaux with his bride all next day ; on the following day he left her there and returned to Anet. Madame de Vendôme went back to her mother till the Grand Prior's house at the Temple could be got ready for her ; it was much out of repair, and the Grand Prior himself absent from the kingdom. The wedding did not even furnish a topic for conversation ; it was as if nothing had happened. How brilliant it would have been a few years earlier ! and what a change since M. de Vendôme used to come back in triumph from Italy ! He seemed to be attending his own wedding merely as a spectator ; and afterwards lived at Anet as if he had forgotten that he was married at all.

CHAPTER XXII

1710

Death of the Duke de Coislin—His peculiarities—Ill-natured interference in a judicial decision—His successor—Absurd objection to his reception as a Peer—The King's reasons for displeasure with the Bishop of Metz—Allows him after a time to succeed his brother as Duke—Death of the Maréchale de la Melleraye—She thinks a man of high birth will not be damned—Her second husband beats her—I am again invited to Marly—Conversation with M. de Beauvilliers about the Duke of Burgundy—At his request I write an essay on the subject—Summary of my essay—Explanation of some parts of it—Character of the Duke of Burgundy—M. de Beauvilliers wishes to show him my essay—I remonstrate—The question referred to M. de Chevreuse—He decides against showing it.

THE Duke de Coislin did not long survive his friend M. le Duc. He was the only man who ever subjugated M. le Duc ; he never allowed him to take liberties, and sometimes used the plainest language to him, without M. le Duc's venturing to say a word in reply. He was a very clever man, but eccentric to the last degree ; very agreeable in serious conversation, though he never laid himself out to be so ; always witty and extremely amusing, but ill-natured ; and dangerous, for he never let slip an opportunity of saying a good thing. He despised soldiering, and had left the service long ago ; he also despised the Court, and hardly ever went near it. Consequently he was in bad odour with the King ; but that did not trouble him much. He lived in the very best society, by which he was much run after, though he took little pains to make advances. One of his peculiarities was that he made it a point of honour never to make the first bow to any one ; but he used to say so in such a funny way that people could not take offence, and merely laughed. When the King completed the present buildings at Trianon everybody rushed to see them. Roquelaure asked the Duke de Coislin what he thought of them ; to which he replied that he did not think of them at all, for he had not seen them. "I know why," said Roquelaure ; "it is because Trianon did not make you the first visit."

I cannot refrain from telling a characteristic story of the Duke de Coislin. He and his brother-in-law the Duke de Sully, with M. de Foix, took it into their heads to attend a sitting of the Parliament, and they pressed me so strongly to go with them that I could not refuse; it was the only occasion on which I ever attended a sitting without necessity. M. de Foix, who was indolent and did not spend his nights alone, did not come; so that I found myself seated between the two brothers-in-law. Le Nain, who was at that time the senior member of the Parliament, and bore a high reputation for uprightness and ability, summed up in an important lawsuit. The costs were heavy, amounting to 40,000 livres; and Le Nain was of opinion that each side should pay its own. Le Meunier, also an old lawyer of great ability, but of bad reputation, moved that the costs should be paid by the losing side. On this point the Court was divided, though unanimously agreed on the main question.

The Duke de Coislin began to laugh, and told me that we must make the voting equal; for it would be good fun to see a case taken from the Grand Chamber to be finally decided by a *Chambre des Enquêtes*. I thought he was joking; but, seeing that he was carefully counting the votes given and begging me to side with the minority, so that there might be a tie, I asked him if he was not ashamed to saddle the unfortunate defendants with costs to the amount of 40,000 livres, merely for his amusement. I said that, as we knew nothing of the affair, we ought to give our voices in favour of leniency; especially as we could rely on the opinion of an upright, able man like Le Nain, who had studied the case thoroughly. He still went on laughing, repeating that it would be funny if there was a tie, and we must certainly arrange it so. Out of pity for the defendants, who were quite unknown to us, I made sure of the Duke de Sully, who agreed with me that each side should pay its own costs. Our votes were given last of all; the Duke de Coislin, who had calculated that he would make the voting equal by siding with Le Meunier, did so; the Duke de Sully and I sided with Le Nain; the result was a tie. The First-President, Harlay, remonstrated with the Court, reminding them how unbecoming and inconvenient it was that such a thing should occur in the Grand Chamber; he said he should take the votes again, adding that, in his own opinion, each

side should pay its own costs. While the voting was going on the Duke de Coislin was splitting with laughter, quite determined to change his own vote or not, as might be required to bring about another tie. The voting was again equal.

The First-President was very angry, and spoke for nearly a quarter of an hour, trying to put the members on their mettle, and urging them to avoid the discreditable necessity of referring the matter for decision to an inferior Court ; he then took the votes for the third time. As the devil would have it, there was again a tie, although several members of the Court had changed their opinions, M. de Coislin voting as before. If he had given his voice on the other side the tie would of course have been avoided ; Harlay looked very black at him, and again addressed the members, saying that only one vote was required to save the credit of the Court, and trying to arouse their compassion for the losing side. It was all in vain, no one responded to his appeal ; so that at last he preferred the so-called honour of the Court to the pockets of the unfortunate defendants, and declared that, to avoid a tie, he changed his vote, and gave it in favour of Le Meunier. He then pronounced judgement in favour of the plaintiffs, with full costs. I scolded the Duke de Coislin well ; but he was delighted with his performance, and did nothing but laugh. He was notoriously impotent, and for that very reason spent large sums on an actress, who governed him completely ; his family and the few persons who had occasion to do business with him had to pay court to her. He had married a sister of d'Alégre, afterwards Marshal of France, who had a very unhappy life with him ; but he had long been a widower.

His heirs were his brother and sister, the Bishop of Metz and Madame de Sully ; his dignity passed, as a matter of course, to the Bishop of Metz, and this gave rise to some talk. The Count de Roucy, who was absolutely devoid of common sense, and rough in his manners, but obsequious and servile, was a leading figure in the Court of Monseigneur ; and not on bad terms with the King, though nobody had any respect for him, especially since Blenheim. In spite of his affectation of a frank, open-hearted familiarity with everybody, which endeared him to the valets, he was in reality the most envious of men, and the most absurdly vainglorious. He chose to be displeased at the idea of the

Bishop of Metz becoming a Duke and Peer. He went to Monseigneur and said how funny the Bishop of Metz would look with a sword and plumed hat ; and, as the man he was talking to was no cleverer than himself, he actually persuaded him that a priest and Bishop could not be a Duke and Peer ; just as if it were essential to that dignity to wear a sword and plumes, and as if there were not already Peer-Bishops sitting in Parliament with a costume peculiar to themselves. He went afterwards to the dinner of the Duke and Duchess of Burgundy, where he talked in the same way ; but not with the same success. The Duke of Burgundy laughed at him and his silly, spiteful jokes ; and was so good-natured as to explain (which was easy enough) that the Bishop of Metz could, and must, succeed to his brother's dignity, since he was the son of the first Duke, and not civilly dead through having been convicted of a crime, or through taking religious vows. However, among the envious and ignorant who form the majority in all Courts the Count de Roucy found many supporters, though none of them could find anything to allege against the Bishop's claims except the absurd objection concerning the sword and plumes, which would hardly have taken in a child.

The Bishop of Metz was not on bad terms with the Count de Roucy. There had never been any quarrel between them ; but he had inherited a younger son's portion of eccentricity, he was not good-natured, and not liked by everybody ; moreover, his ecclesiastical preferments had aroused the jealousy of many among the clergy, even among those who could not consider themselves eligible for such a see as Metz, or such an office as he held. His affair furnished a topic of conversation in society and in the saloon at Marly throughout the rest of the day ; in the evening, to the general astonishment, it became known that the King himself said there were difficulties in the way of the Bishop's succession. Next morning Pontchartrain was the bearer of a message from the King to the Bishop, forbidding him to assume the title of Duke, or any of the outward distinctions of that dignity, till he had inquired into the matter. The Bishop asked that some one might be appointed to inquire into it, but was refused ; whereupon he removed his coat of arms from his plate and carriages, and wherever it appeared ; for he dared not assume the ducal mantle, and he was determined that his arms should not appear without it. He

then retired to his diocese in disgust. He was not likely to obtain the appointment of a commissioner to inquire into his affairs, still less to have an audience of the King himself. The fact was that, although the King did not know much about such matters, he was perfectly aware that there was no difficulty whatever in the case, and that the Bishop of Metz had become a Duke and Peer immediately on his brother's death; but he was much displeased with the Bishop. For certain reasons he could not show his displeasure openly, and he gladly availed himself of the Count de Roucy's silly objection to punish him by keeping him in a state of suspense; which he could prolong as long as he thought proper. The Bishop was in such despair that he fell ill and, really and literally, nearly went out of his mind. I will now explain his offence; it was twofold.

The King had always liked Cardinal de Coislin, and most justly held him in the highest veneration till the time of his death; but afterwards he let himself be talked over by Father Tellier, who persuaded him that the Cardinal was a Jansenist, and had filled important posts in his diocese of Orleans with persons who ought to be got rid of. They were in reality persons of the first merit, universally recognised as such, and warmly attached to the Cardinal. They were deprived of their offices, and some of them were banished. There was a general outcry throughout the diocese, which only made the persecutors more bitter. They caused the Cardinal's tomb to be removed, on the pretext that people resorted to it to pray; and this pious custom, which had sprung up immediately after his death, and was merely the outcome of the saintly reputation which he had borne throughout his life, was forcibly prevented. The Bishop of Metz, who had done his best to harbour and protect the banished ecclesiastics, lost all patience when his uncle's tomb was destroyed; the more so because he had forcibly and vainly remonstrated with the King. He let fall some imprudent speeches, which were reported, with spiteful exaggerations, to the King, and aroused his resentment.

The second offence given by the Bishop was connected with a visit to the newly completed chapel at Versailles; which he made in company with the Dukes de la Rocheguyon and de Villeroy, and M. de Castries. They took Fornaro with them. This Fornaro was a very clever man, who claimed to be a Sicilian Duke. M. de la Feuillade had

brought him back from Sicily, whither he dared not return after the amnesty, because he was accused of having poisoned his wife ; he lived with M. de la Feuillade till his death, acting as tutor to his son. After the death of M. de la Feuillade he contrived to quarter himself on M. de la Rochefoucauld, though he did not actually live in his house ; it was at this time that he began to set himself up as a man of quality. He was clever with his pencil, and had much taste and skill in architecture, especially where large buildings were concerned. He designed a charming flight of steps at Liancourt, in a position where no architect had ever succeeded in contriving one ; this gave him a reputation, for M. de la Rochefoucauld sang his praises everywhere, and even procured him admission to Marly, his name being on the list like those of other courtiers. The King used sometimes to talk to him about his buildings and fountains, so that Mansart became uneasy and jealous of him. He was accused of tale-bearing ; and in fact M. de la Rochefoucauld turned him out of his house on account of something which became known, though it had been talked of among three or four persons only, of whom none could be suspected except Fornaro. The King heard of it, and reproached M. de la Rochefoucauld ; at the same time he doubled the pension which M. de la Feuillade had formerly induced him to give Fornaro. After this Fornaro went on living at Versailles in greater favour than ever with the King, and was invited more frequently to Marly, though despised by everybody.

Well, as I said before, the Bishop of Metz went with these other gentlemen to inspect the new chapel, taking Fornaro with them to have the benefit of his taste and judgement. The Bishop, struck with the profusion and magnificence of the gilding, painting, and carving, and being still irritated about the Orleans affair, could not refrain from saying that it would be better, and more pleasing to God, if the King would pay his starving troops, instead of piling up so many precious things at the expense of his people, ground down as they were by taxation, and wasted with misery. He would have held forth at greater length on this theme had not M. de Castries, who was as prudent as the Bishop was the reverse, restrained him, and drawn his attention to the presence of Fornaro. But he had said quite enough, and that same evening the King heard it all, word for word.

His letters to his friends were equally indiscreet. Since Louvois had unfortunately discovered the fatal art of opening letters, the King always saw extracts from such as were of interest; the Bishop's letters added fresh fuel to his anger, and the more so because, having obtained his information in such a manner, he did not like to show openly that he possessed it.

Accordingly he was pleased to avenge himself by keeping the Bishop out of his lawful rights for more than a year, and laughing at him afterwards. When he thought the injustice of keeping up the suspension any longer would be too glaring, he sent Pontchartrain to the Bishop to say that he had no need for further information concerning his affairs; he had reasons for acting as he had done, but he had never doubted that, through the death of his elder brother, the Bishop had inherited the dignity of Duke and Peer; he now gave him leave to assume all the outward marks of that dignity, and to take his seat in Parliament. The Bishop was at Versailles at the time; he sent word to me at once, for he was grateful to me for taking his part as I had done. An hour later he went to thank the King, but could extract no explanation from him; he was received politely, but that was all.

When he proposed to take his seat in Parliament a hitch occurred which he could not have foreseen: the magistrates raised an objection to his costume; and they were supported by some Dukes, for among the Dukes are many who are very ignorant and will not take the trouble to learn. They contended that he must appear in rochet and hood, because he was a Peer in his own right, and not by virtue of his see. The contention was absurd, for, though people talk of an "ecclesiastical Peer," it is merely a convenient expression: there is no such thing in reality. All Peers, whether churchmen or laymen, enjoy equal dignity, and there is no distinction of costume among them; those who happen to be ecclesiastics are all dressed alike, and the same with those who are laymen. After some wrangling and a few days' delay, the objectors listened to reason; the Bishop was received in the ordinary costume of an ecclesiastical Peer, and never wore any other in Parliament.

He began by signing himself "Duke de Coislin, Bishop of Metz"; but soon afterwards he dropped the latter part, and signed himself simply "Duke de Coislin." The Bishops were very angry about it, and made such a fuss that, when

writing to a Bishop, he did add "Bishop of Metz" to his signature, but to no one else. I do not know why he did not usually call himself "Duke de Coislin." Spanish Bishops always adopt their hereditary titles when they have them; I remember that the Bishop of Cuença was always spoken of as the Duke of Abrantes. I suppose that, as he was the first instance of a Bishop succeeding to the dignity of Duke, he did not like to venture on a novelty; especially as he knew himself to be out of favour with the King.

The Maréchale de la Melleraye died about this time at the age of eighty-eight. She was aunt on the father's side to the Maréchale de Villeroy, and to my brother-in-law, the Duke de Brissac. I have already mentioned her intense family pride, and how she made the Duke de Brissac add a cap of dignity to his arms: an example which has been followed by others, I do not know why, any more than I know why she thought so much of her family. It produced some illustrious men in the reigns of Francis I and his successors, but before that period it was not of much account. The alliances by marriage of the later Dukes de Brissac of both branches have been wretched, and the Dukes themselves, since the last Marshal, have been poor creatures. I make this remark because, since the King's death, I see so many people who give themselves the most ridiculous airs on the ground of their descent, real or pretended, from illustrious personages of that period, though their families have since fallen into complete obscurity. What makes a family really illustrious is antiquity, great fiefs, great connections by marriage, great offices, dating from the earliest times on record, and kept up ever since, not merely modern distinctions; and in the case of the persons I speak of these distinctions have not been maintained. They show no trace of resemblance to the great ancestor whom they parade; indeed, very often they are not really descended from him. But to return to the Maréchale de la Melleraye.

People were talking in her presence of the Chevalier de Soissons, brother to the Count de Soissons and Prince Eugène, who had just died very young and very suddenly; he was extremely debauched, and held many ecclesiastical benefices, and they were moralising about him. The Maréchale listened for some time, and then remarked, with an air of profound conviction: "Well, for my part, I feel

sure that, in the case of a man of his birth, God will think twice before he puts him among the damned !” The others burst out laughing, but there was no shaking her opinion.

Her vanity was cruelly punished. She was the second wife of Marshal de la Melleraye, by whom she had no children ; and she used rather to apologise for her condescension in marrying him. After his death she fell in love with St. Ruth, who had been her husband’s page, and married him ; but she took care not to forfeit her *tabouret* by declaring her marriage. St. Ruth was by birth only just a gentleman, and very poor. He was tall and well-made, but, when he was known in society, extremely ugly ; perhaps he had become so since his marriage. He was a very brave man and a soldier of distinction ; he rose to the rank of Lieutenant-General and Lieutenant of the Body-guards. He was very violent, and, when the Maréchale de la Melleraye gave him too much of her tongue, he used to take a stick and beat her well. This went on till the Maréchale could stand it no longer ; she went to the King, confessed her weakness and her shame, and implored his protection. The King received her kindly ; he sent for St. Ruth, and forbade him to ill-treat the Maréchale. Things went on better for a time, but the force of habit was too much for St. Ruth, and the stick came into play again. The Maréchale complained a second, and a third, time ; at last the King sent St. Ruth away to Guyenne, and afterwards to Ireland, where he was killed. He had no children.

The Maréchale had been extremely beautiful and witty. She turned the head of Cardinal de Retz to such a degree that he did all he could to throw France into confusion. His intention was to reduce the King to extremities, and force him to use his influence at Rome to obtain a dispensation to enable him, a priest and consecrated Bishop, to marry the Maréchale de la Melleraye, whose husband was alive, living with her on good terms, and possessing the confidence of the Court to the highest degree ! Such madness is incredible ; nevertheless, so it was.

The Duchess of Burgundy’s confinement, followed by Lent, had kept the King for several months at Versailles, without going to Marly. He went there on Monday the 28th of April, and stayed till the 17th of May ; this was the first stay at Marly since my audience. I was away at La Ferté ; but Madame de Saint-Simon presented herself for

an invitation, and we received it. I went straight from La Ferté to Marly ; and from that time up to the King's death I was asked to every party at Marly except one. I noticed from the very first that the King spoke to me, and distinguished me, more than was his usual custom with men of my age ; unless they held some appointment which brought them into his familiar circle.

Being thus restored to my usual mode of life, I often had occasion to converse with my friends among the leading courtiers and Ministers about the alarming condition of public affairs, which they did not disguise from me, and concerning which their sentiments were identical with my own. A few days after the return of the Court to Versailles I went, as I often did, to spend a day at Vaucresson, where the Duke de Beauvilliers had made a most charming retreat for himself. He usually spent every Thursday and Friday there ; and this sanctuary was inaccessible to the world in general ; only his own family and four or five intimate friends were ever admitted to it. As I was talking alone with him in his garden, our conversation drifted insensibly to the Duke of Burgundy ; and I told him frankly what I thought of that Prince's conduct. Although this matter had often been discussed between us, it happened that we had never gone into it so fully, and my opinions had never before struck him so forcibly. We talked afterwards about other subjects ; and we only left the garden when dinner was announced.

When we rose from table M. de Beauvilliers asked me to take another turn in the garden with him, and begged me to repeat what I had said in the morning about the Duke of Burgundy, adding anything that might have occurred to me in the interval. I demurred, telling him that he could not have forgotten what I had said so recently, and I thought I had said pretty nearly all that I had to say. However, he urged me, and I obeyed. The conversation was long, though he took little part in it. When I had finished he proposed that I should write down my impressions of the Prince's conduct, pointing out where I thought he made mistakes, either of omission or otherwise. The suggestion took me by surprise ; I protested against it, and asked what use he intended to make of such an essay. He replied that it might be of the greatest service to the Duke of Burgundy, and at any rate it would be very useful to himself

when talking to the young Prince. I protested still more strongly, on the ground that it was very unwise and dangerous to let people in that position see how thoroughly one knows them. He did his best to reassure me on that point by dilating on the virtues of the Duke of Burgundy, and his magnanimous way of thinking. In the end we came to a compromise : I was to write the paper, and he promised to make no use of it without my special permission. After this we separated, and went to rejoin the rest of the company in the house. I was greatly surprised by his request, but determined to meet his wishes by writing something which could be shown to the Duke of Burgundy.

I set to work at it a few days later. I wrote about half of it in accordance with my original intention that it should be shown to the Prince ; but then my pen ran away with me, for I found that certain things could not be left out without spoiling it. So I let myself go ; but with the firm determination to strike out some passages if M. de Beauvilliers insisted on showing it, although I thought they were in reality indispensable. I kept a copy of it ; and, though it is rather long, I will insert it here, for it gives a very good idea of the Duke of Burgundy's character. Some of my arguments, examples, and comparisons may not be to the taste of everybody ; but that is because, if they were to produce any effect on the Duke of Burgundy, it was necessary to adapt them to his taste and way of thinking. Moreover, they had to be adapted to the mind of the Duke de Beauvilliers ; for, although he was not so hampered by petty scruples as was the Duke of Burgundy at this period, he was not altogether free from them ; and arguments such as I used were more likely to influence them than others, more in accordance with the taste of people in general.

“ An Essay on His Royal Highness the Duke of Burgundy, addressed to the Duke de Beauvilliers, in compliance with his special request. Dated the 25th of May, 1710 :

“ You found our conversation at Vaucresson so interesting, you tell me, that you wish to possess a record of it more durable than the fleeting recollection of a chat under the shade of your trees ; and also, that you would have me go into the subject more fully than was possible on that occasion. I have the less difficulty in complying with your request because I yield to no one, not even to yourself, in

respectful attachment to the Prince who was the subject of our conversation, or in admiration for his good qualities, so rare in this age. I shall therefore have nothing to say which can possibly hurt your feelings ; and since this outpouring of my zeal for his personal reputation (which is closely bound up with, and indeed arises from, my solicitude for the welfare of the State), is intended for your eyes only, it will be a relief to me to obey your injunctions, and tell you my thoughts without any disguise whatever.

“ It is my honest conviction that few ages have produced a Prince so richly endowed by Providence with talents and good qualities as His Royal Highness the Duke of Burgundy. His intellect is active, capacious, and penetrating ; his industry is great ; the most difficult branches of science have a natural attraction for him ; he is eager to learn, and pursues his inquiries with a real desire to improve himself. The field which you were appointed to cultivate was therefore rich and fertile, and, assisted by a most skilful hand,¹ which would seem indeed to have been specially designed by Heaven for the education of a young Prince, you have made of your pupil all that can be desired in one called upon to restore the shattered fortunes of the noblest kingdom in Europe. Nature, always delighting in caprices, gave him a hot and passionate disposition, which seemed of ill omen for the future ; but the grace of God, whose delight it is to overcome the caprices of Nature, worked such a change in him, in the very midst of the boiling passions of youth, that it can really be called nothing less than a miracle. This change has now lasted for several years, in spite of the temptations incident to his age and station, to which he has been, and is still, exposed ; the victory may therefore be regarded as complete, and there is no reason to fear that it will not be permanent. This happy state of things would leave nothing to be desired if only he would, as he might easily, allow the rare and exquisite qualities with which Nature has so marvellously endowed him to become more generally known ; and if, on the other hand, certain trifling blemishes, such as are allotted to all great men in order that the world may see that they are but mortal, and be preserved from worshipping them, were manifested less conspicuously. I shall lose no time in describing the Prince’s character or attempting to draw his

¹ Fénelon, (Saint-Simon’s note.)

portrait ; it is a task beyond the powers of the most skilful artist, and moreover you know him thoroughly. I shall merely consider such points of his character and conduct as I think necessary to explain what I mean ; and I shall consider them, not only in the abstract, but with regard to the effect they produce on the outside world ; for, in the wretched lack of serious occupation to which my station in life condemns me, I have necessarily more opportunities for mixing with the world than you have ; and I hear more of its impertinent and ill-natured chatter.

“Considering how numerous and how complex are the duties imposed upon a Sovereign, it is not, I think, to the advantage of a Prince destined to a throne that he should ascend it too early. In every condition of life men have to fit themselves for the duties of the particular profession which they have chosen ; they ought to make themselves capable of filling any office to which it may lead them ; but, the powers of the human mind being limited, it would be waste of time to strive after universal knowledge, or to prepare themselves for positions to which they are never likely to be called. In the same way, a Prince destined to govern a great nation should endeavour, while as yet free from the burden of the Crown, to make himself capable of bearing it. He should set himself to acquire knowledge ; but, since he cannot learn everything, it is important that he should make a wise choice of subjects. This is indeed the essential point for him, to perceive clearly what knowledge is best worth acquiring, and, having done so, to devote himself to it with unceasing diligence ; and yet this is not all, there is something more to be added. It is not enough that a Prince should choose his studies wisely, and make himself really fit for his position ; his acquirements will lose much of their value if he cannot inspire his future subjects with a belief in his capacity, and make them feel that he is worthy to be their leader.

“Bearing in mind these two important points, it seems to me that a Prince’s studies should be directed, first, to those branches of science which tend to develop and stimulate the reasoning powers ; and, to what must be of even greater consequence to him, the history of his own country. But to these studies he must add another : he should spare no pains to acquire a knowledge of men, for without that the most acute and enlightened intellect will be of little use

to him. Men are the instruments which he must employ ; if he does not understand them thoroughly he will be working in the dark. No other knowledge can make up for the want of this ; without it the most vigilant and minute precautions will not preserve him from a thousand pitfalls. It is, therefore, no slight advantage to the heir to a Crown to find himself still a subject after he has reached the age of discretion, for in his intercourse with other men he is not precluded from a certain measure of familiarity, which will become impossible when he has once assumed the diadem. This gives him admirable opportunities for the study of character. As the time when he will be the sole dispenser of favours is still remote and uncertain, men, while conversing with him, will not be perpetually thinking of their own interests ; and, if his intercourse with them is frequent and familiar, they will hardly be able to avoid showing themselves as they really are. This will give him an insight into their characters, and into those of others among his surroundings, which will be of infinite value to him.

“ I am conscious that I have expressed myself badly, but the soundness of the propositions which I have laid down cannot, I think, be seriously questioned ; they lead me on to find fault with the conduct of the Duke of Burgundy in two particulars. His mode of life is such that it is not possible for him to acquire any real knowledge of men ; consequently people do not, and cannot, know him. He has only two ways of passing his time : during part of the day, in conformity with his natural inclination, he is shut up in his private room, immersed in study and serious meditation ; the rest he spends in occupations forced upon him by his position ; but he does it in such a way that this portion of his time is as much wasted as the first, so far as acquiring a knowledge of men is concerned. There is a period of a man’s life which ought to be given up mainly to deriving instruction from books ; and this period ought by no means to be brought to a close at the age when he is emancipated from the yoke of masters and tutors ; it should be prolonged for several years, so that he may digest what he has learnt, pursue his studies for himself, and acquire a taste for serious things which will help to preserve him from the temptations of pleasure and dissipation. But, in the case of the Duke of Burgundy, this second period of study has already been turned to such good account that it cannot be prolonged

further without detriment to the more serious occupation for which it was intended as a preparation. There is a time to gather, and a time to spend ; the latter has long since arrived for the Duke of Burgundy, though he seems not to realise it ; and he is letting it slip by, to his own grievous loss."

After this preamble I went on to discuss the subject in detail. When the Prince was not shut up in his private room he was always surrounded by a pack of women, the young married ladies of the Duchess of Burgundy's household, and they treated him with very disrespectful familiarity. I ventured to suggest that he should put a stop to this, and see less of them ; for, as I pointed out, the world, though not over precise where morality is concerned, would hardly have forgiven him this exclusive association with women even if pleasure had been his motive ; as his austerity in such matters was well known, it simply made him an object of ridicule. I mentioned the ill-natured talk which still went on about his conduct during the campaign in Flanders : his ill-timed games of tennis or battledore ; and certain childish scientific experiments to which he was reported to be too much addicted. These things, I said, though trifling in themselves, became of importance because people who did not know him judged his character from the stories they heard about him ; and his mode of life was such that hardly any one did know him.

To remedy this, I suggested that he would do well to converse more with the men about the Court, making opportunities for confidential talks with them ; being careful, of course, not to single out one or two individuals, for fear of raising the cry of favouritism ; but, on the contrary, talking sometimes to one, sometimes to another ; choosing a General, a nobleman with something to recommend him besides an illustrious name, a man of the robe experienced in negotiations, and so on ; picking their brains, and getting them to talk of things they understood. In this way, I suggested, he would not only make himself popular, but acquire much useful information, and, above all, knowledge of men and an insight into their characters. There was one great hindrance to his conversing freely in this manner with men of various positions ; he was terribly hampered by religious scruples. His notions^y of Christian

charity were so rigid that he could not bear to hear a man's faults or mistakes hinted at ever so lightly : and that was the chief reason why his conversation was restricted to trifles or to scientific subjects. I ventured to combat this mistaken view of his religious duty at considerable length, using such arguments, drawn from Holy Scripture and other sources, as I thought most likely to influence him and the Duke de Beauvilliers ; and pointing out that, to fit himself for his future position, it was absolutely necessary for him to know the characters of the men he had to deal with, their faults and weaknesses, no less than their good qualities.

Following up this argument, I was led to a more delicate subject. I took the liberty of suggesting that the time he devoted to prayer and religious observances was out of all proportion to that given to his other duties ; and I ventured to urge that he should be less rigid in his attendance at Divine service on Sundays, Saints' days, and other festivals ; and less austere in his avoidance of balls, plays, and other amusements. I dwelt on this topic at considerable length, pointing out that he was called by Providence to take an active part in public affairs, and that an assiduity in religious observances which could be highly meritorious in a monk was for him a grievous error, not to say a sin ; because it robbed him of much precious time which he might employ more profitably, and in a manner more pleasing to God, by preparing himself for the duties of his future position. I hinted that his pious austerity had sometimes led him to treat the King in a manner not very becoming in a grandson ; and gave it as my deliberate opinion that the continuance of a too rigid observance of the outward practices of religion on his part would only lead to the growth of a detestable and dangerous spirit of hypocrisy in the Court.

The closing sentences of my essay were as follows :

“ The Duke of Burgundy's strictness in religious observances has, I fear, produced a false impression upon the public mind ; there is a widespread belief that he estimates a man's capacity for employment in the public service, and even his natural ability, according to the opinion which he has formed of his piety ; that, in short, he would select a religious man to fill any high office for no other reason than that he is religious. Such principles would, it is needless

to say, produce disastrous results, if carried into practice ; but, even if they are wrongfully attributed to the Duke of Burgundy, the belief that he is inspired by them is most mischievous, and no pains should be spared to eradicate it. It is impossible to exaggerate the unfortunate impression caused by the report (which is universally believed), that he recently consulted the Sorbonne, or at any rate some specially selected Doctors of Theology, on the question whether it is, or is not, lawful in the present position of public affairs, to declare war against the King of Spain. If you deny the truth of the report in Parisian or provincial society people are indignant, and declare that they are not to be imposed upon ; it is equally useless to deny it at Court, for men and ladies alike smile disdainfully and begin talking of something else ; if you persist in your denial they express their pity for dupes who refuse to see, and generally end by losing their tempers. This obstinate belief is confirmed by the Prince's lengthy and frequent conferences with his confessor ; to whom, however, people wish a long life, because he is generally esteemed, and no one knows who might be his successor. His office is already regarded as the most important in the Prince's Council ; people look forward with dismay to a time when public affairs will be inextricably mixed up with religious and theological questions, and no ministerial appointments will be made without reference to them ; and they cannot refrain from sad forebodings when they think of the last Princes of the House of Austria who wore the Spanish crown. These current rumours fill honest people with dismay ; to the ill-disposed they furnish matter for malignant and sarcastic comments ; and it is useless to question their accuracy, for no one will listen. Such are the mischievous consequences which ensue when the real character of a Prince is unknown to those who surround him.

“ These considerations should induce our Prince to spare no pains in acquiring that knowledge of men which I have so repeatedly urged in this essay ; he should indeed consider it a solemn religious duty, and devote all his energies to it. Let him cease to hide under a bushel that pure and brilliant light which God, when He endowed him with it, intended should be placed on the highest possible candlestick ; let him show himself as he really is, and he may rest assured that he will be regarded, like Titus of old, as the delight of the human race. He may, if he pleases, show

himself as great as our last Kings, his illustrious and high-minded ancestors, without falling short of the sanctity of St. Louis ; he has only to make up his mind firmly to do so ; for all that is required of him is, that he shall allow the world to perceive and recognise the admirable gifts which have been so abundantly bestowed upon him.

“ You insisted so strongly on my telling you, not only my own sentiments about the Duke of Burgundy, but what is said about him in the world, that I have thought it my duty to speak with the utmost frankness, making no attempt to conceal or soften anything. As I said at the outset, the idle life, which has now become the inevitable lot of a man in my position, gives me better opportunities than you have for hearing the gossip of society. You well know how angry that ill-natured gossip has often made me when the Duke of Burgundy was its subject ; all my friends of both sexes can testify to my indignation ; moreover, I can appeal to the public at large, for I have never shrunk from declaring my sentiments in the most open manner. I must now leave it to your judgement and discretion to deal as you think fit with the candid reflections which you have compelled me to submit to you ; the matter contained in them is such that nothing short of the profound respect which I have long felt for you would have induced me to comply with your wishes. I must ask you, however, to consider this essay as intended for your eyes only. You are accustomed to keep inviolate the most important secrets of State ; from the experience of our long friendship I know you will regard these confidences as equally sacred ; for you are well aware how infinitely important it is for me that my connection with them should be kept absolutely secret.”

A brief analysis of this essay may be useful for the future. I must explain, first of all, that the natural disposition of the Duke of Burgundy was terrible. He was so passionate that he would smash his clocks when they struck an hour which called him to something he did not like ; and he used to break out into transports of rage against the rain when it interfered with his amusements. The slightest contradiction made him furious ; I have often witnessed it myself in his boyhood. He had, moreover, an ardent temperament ; which made him seek every kind of forbidden pleasure, both of body and mind. He was extremely sarcastic, and his

sarcasms were the more cruel because they were clever and witty, and he hit off any ridiculous trait with unsparing accuracy. He was proud and overbearing to an inconceivable degree, and dangerous to deal with, because he easily saw through people ; moreover, he was quick to perceive the weak point in an argument, and could reason better than his masters. It must be admitted that when his passion had abated he recovered his self-command ; then he felt his faults, and admitted them, sometimes with so much anger against himself that he would fall into a fresh paroxysm of fury. His mind was quick, active, and penetrating ; the more difficult the problem, the more he braced himself up to grapple with it ; it may be said with truth that his ability in every way was far above the average.

By a most extraordinary miracle, religion and the grace of God made quite a different man of him in a very short space of time, and turned his formidable defects into virtues of a totally opposite character. All the praises bestowed upon him in my essay may therefore be regarded as perfectly sincere, and thoroughly well deserved. He always had a taste for abstract sciences ; and he fell back on them as a substitute for the pleasures which still attracted him, though he shunned them with terror, even such as were perfectly innocent. This was why he shut himself up so much in his room ; it was the only place where he really felt free, for there he could always amuse himself and occupy his mind ; whereas in society he was constrained and uneasy ; he was, if one may use such an expression, a slave to Christian charity, and always afraid of saying or doing something wrong in the sight of God. The remembrance of the struggle it had cost him to overcome his violent passions, and the exaggerated enthusiasm of a novice in religious matters, made him overstep the bounds in the opposite direction ; austerity made him appear stiff ; and, without intending it, he often assumed the air of a censor, which alienated Monseigneur from him completely, and was very displeasing to the King himself.

I could exemplify this by a thousand anecdotes, but I will content myself with one instance which made the King extremely angry, and shocked the whole Court. Two or three years before this time we were at Marly, and there was a ball on the day of the Epiphany. The Duke of Burgundy refused even to show himself at it ; and an-

nounced his intention so early in the day that the King, who was much displeased, had time to remonstrate with him. He did so jokingly at first ; but afterwards, in his annoyance at seeing himself condemned by his own grandson, he spoke very seriously and angrily. The Duchess of Burgundy, her ladies, and M. de Beauvilliers himself, also remonstrated with the Prince ; but with no effect. He said the King was the master, and he did not take upon himself to blame anything he thought proper to do ; but the Epiphany being a triple Feast, and of especial sanctity to Christians through the calling of the Gentiles and the baptism of our Saviour, he thought he ought not to profane it by being present at a scene which was only just tolerable on an ordinary day. It was represented to him that, having dedicated the morning and afternoon to the services of the Church, and spent several hours in private prayer, he might, and ought to, give up the evening, as a mark of respect for the wishes of his Sovereign and grandfather. It was all useless ; and except while the King was at supper, he spent the whole evening shut up in his room.

With this austerity he combined a sort of precise way of taking everything literally and seriously, the result of his education ; this made him stiff in society, and consequently made other people feel uncomfortable ; he always seemed ill at ease and anxious to get away ; as if he had something better to do, and felt that he was wasting his time. On the other hand, he was often like a young seminarist, making up for the constraint of the day's exercises by playing all sorts of childish tricks, and making as much noise as he can. He was passionately in love with the Duchess of Burgundy, and abandoned himself to his passion like a man under the strongest restraint with regard to other women ; yet he used to play with the young ladies of their household exactly like a seminarist let loose from school, and they behaved like bold and giddy girls. This explains some passages in my essay which might otherwise seem rather mysterious. I was very anxious that he should overcome his shyness in society ; that he should be more at his ease with the King and Monseigneur, with Madame de Maintenon and Mademoiselle Choin ; and also that when not shut up in his room, he should not spend all his time with the Duchess of Burgundy ; or with that pack of women who took advantage of his kindness and his rather unbecom-

ing familiarity with them. I had to use pious arguments which will not be to the taste of most people ; but they were the only ones likely to make an impression on the Prince, or even on the Duke de Beauvilliers, though his piety was of a more reasonable kind. I had also to enter into a long dissertation about Christian charity and devotional observances in general, in order to lead up to what I wanted to say about his conversing more freely with men ; and about the mischievous opinion which was prevalent, that he judged everything by a theological standard. It was so universally believed that he had consulted theological Doctors about the lawfulness of going to war with Spain, that the King asked him whether it was true ; and was not a little surprised when the Prince assured him positively that he had never even thought of such a thing. It was this which forced me to say a few words in disapproval of the Prince's long and frequent consultations with his confessor ; and, as I had praised the tutor at the beginning of my essay, to make my subsequent remarks more palatable, so I had to praise the confessor at the end ; in order to avoid offending the penitent, and induce him to listen to my hints about the last Kings of Spain. My essay ends, as it began, with the Prince's praises ; this sweetening was indispensable before and after the unpleasant things I had to say.

But the work of grace, which had already wrought such miracles in him, was soon completed, and made of him an accomplished and perfect Prince. All that was petty in him, his scruples, his failings, vanished, and left nothing that was not perfect in every way. But alas ! perfection is not for this world ; God revealed it to us for a brief space, to show His power and goodness ; and then withdrew it as a chastisement for our sins.

This essay was quickly written, for my mind was full of the subject ; I did not even correct the first rough draft, but read it to the Duke de Beauvilliers just as it stands here. I may say without affectation that it pleased him extremely. There were only two things he objected to, what I had said about the Prince's too scrupulous attendance at divine service on saints' days and Sundays, on which point he eventually gave way, and the lawfulness of going to theatres, in which I never could induce him to agree with me. The rest of the essay was entirely to his satisfaction. He wished me to read it to him a second time, and in my

turn I asked him to consider my remarks about the Prince's childish experiments with flies, toads, and other things, which I feared were expressed too strongly. He agreed with me, but thought it so necessary that strong remarks should be made on this subject that he would not allow me to omit, or even to soften, them. I drew his attention to the question of the confessor, but he approved highly of what I had said.

The question then arose as to what use should be made of my essay ; and this caused the longest and warmest dispute I ever had with him. He wanted not only to show the essay to the Prince, but to tell him who had written it, of course explaining that he had asked me to do so. I expostulated warmly on account of the danger to myself ; in the end, as we could not agree, he suggested that we should refer the question to the Duke de Chevreuse, who was at Paris. I consented more with a view to gaining time for consideration than with any intention of submitting to M. de Chevreuse if he sided with the Duke de Beauvilliers.

Madame de Saint-Simon had been much disturbed at my entering into the agreement at Vaucresson ; she was afraid that the essay, once written, would be taken out of my hands ; and she was still more alarmed when she heard that the Duke de Beauvilliers was so anxious to show it. I know by long experience how sound her judgement was ; and I was distracted between my unwillingness to do anything she disliked and my usual deference for the Duke de Beauvilliers ; the latter being reinforced, I must candidly admit, by a certain silly pride of authorship. In the end I agreed with her to refer the question to a great friend of ours—Cheverny, whom I have sometimes mentioned ; he was in every way qualified to decide it, being clever, upright, a man of the world, and well acquainted with the Duke of Burgundy. His verdict pleased both parties ; he praised my essay, but agreed with Madame de Saint-Simon that it ought on no account to be shown to the Prince, even without mentioning my name ; because my style was easily recognised, and for various reasons there was no one else to whom it could be attributed. So we determined that, whatever the two Dukes might say, we would not allow what I had written to be shown to the Duke of Burgundy ; for, saintly as he was, he might not like to feel that

I saw through him so clearly, or to be found fault with in matters which he would probably not change.

Fortunately the Duke de Chevreuse was also of opinion that my essay should not be shown, and this got me out of my difficulty with the Duke de Beauvilliers ; it was agreed, however, that he should keep his copy, on condition that it should not go out of his own possession ; and he was to be at liberty to use such of its matter as he thought might be useful to the Prince, without mentioning my name. Neither of the two Dukes ever knew that we had taken Cheverny into our confidence.

CHAPTER XXIII

1710

An important intrigue—I resolve in my own interest to promote a marriage between the Duke of Berry and Mademoiselle—Difficulties to be overcome—Apathy of the Duke of Orleans—Madame la Duchesse's daughter Mademoiselle's rival—The Duchess of Burgundy favourable to Mademoiselle—My allies in the scheme—Madame de Lévi—The Duchess de Villeroy—M. and Madame d'O—The Jesuits—M. du Maine—Marshal Boufflers—The Duchess of Burgundy hints at the suitability of the marriage in Monseigneur's presence—His tart remark—The King annoyed by it—The King attempts to retrench expenditure at Marly—Madame la Duchesse's daughters invited there—Mademoiselle also invited—We decide that she had better not go—The Duke of Orleans, after much pressure, consents to write to the King asking his consent to the marriage—I compose a letter for him which he promises to give to the King—Difficulties in the way—The Duke of Orleans' hesitation—At last he delivers the letter—The King consents to the marriage, but asks for time to overcome Monseigneur's opposition.

It is now time to relate the story of an important intrigue, which divided the Court into two opposite factions. It took its rise some time before the occurrences just noticed ; I must therefore retrace my steps. When speaking of the rupture between the Duke of Orleans and Madame d'Argenton I alluded to projects for the marriage of the Duke of Berry ; the Duke and Duchess of Orleans wished to arrange a match between him and Mademoiselle ; Madame la Duchesse was no less anxious to secure him for her own daughter, Mademoiselle de Bourbon. It is necessary to bear in mind the hatred of Madame la Duchesse for the Duke and Duchess of Orleans ; also, that the Duchess of Burgundy was on friendly terms with the Duchess of Orleans, but at daggers drawn with Madame la Duchesse.

There were many obstacles in the way of Mademoiselle's marriage. The disastrous war had reduced the kingdom to such a state of misery that money could hardly be found to supply the most urgent requirements ; a royal marriage, necessitating apanages and the expense of an additional

household, would be an inconvenient strain on the finances. The Duke of Berry was only twenty-four years old ; the King need have no scruples about leaving him unprovided with a wife a little longer, for he had never been engaged in any intrigue of gallantry ; he had indeed shown some inclination that way, but had never known how to carry it on. Moreover, it was possible that a foreign Princess might be found for him, a more suitable arrangement in every way, which might be used to conciliate the Emperor, or to detach Portugal, that dangerous thorn in the side of Spain, from the ranks of our enemies. There were also reasons of a private nature which made it improbable that he would be allowed to marry a daughter of the Duke of Orleans. The King had not really restored his favour to the latter ; Madame de Maintenon was not likely to forgive his biting jest at her expense ; the King of Spain was firmly convinced that he had plotted with the Allies to usurp his throne ; Monseigneur, under the same impression, showed his hatred for him in the most marked way, and was, moreover, entirely under the influence of persons who, for reasons of their own, were anxious that the Duke of Berry should marry Mademoiselle de Bourbon.

These difficulties seemed so formidable to the Duke and Duchess of Orleans that they gave up all hope, and awaited events in a state of passive despair. I saw the difficulties plainly enough, but I thought they might be overcome ; before anything could be done, however, it was necessary to arouse the persons chiefly interested from this condition of hopeless despondency. I will speak of myself with no less frankness than of others ; it was my own self-interest which led me to wish for a marriage between the Duke of Berry and Mademoiselle. I saw that in all probability Mademoiselle de Bourbon would be the successful competitor ; to say nothing of her father, the late M. le Duc, I could not forgive Madame la Duchesse for her behaviour to me in the affair of Madame de Lussan ; and I felt convinced that she had not forgiven the manner in which I had ventured to repay her on that occasion. Moreover, her whole cabal hated me since the campaign in Flanders ; even d'Antin, who had separated himself from it so far as that affair was concerned, had reasons of his own for disliking me, and never missed an opportunity of doing me an injury. I feared the influence of Madame la Duchesse over

Monseigneur even as matters stood ; the marriage of their children would give her boundless authority in the future ; her cabal would use it to carry out their designs against the Duke of Burgundy ; they would crush the Duke and Duchess of Orleans, and I should be crushed with them.

On the other hand, I thought if Mademoiselle were chosen for the Duke of Berry it might be possible to find a counterpoise to Madame la Duchesse's influence ; the Duke of Berry would be drawn to the side of the Duchess of Burgundy, and the united influence of Monseigneur's two sons might be powerful enough to hold that audacious and formidable cabal in check, or even reduce it to subjection. In short, the question for me was whether my friends or my enemies should get the upper hand ; whether in the coming reign of Monseigneur those to whom I was most attached should be raised to the highest pinnacle, or cast into the abyss. My own future prospects depended on the result, to say nothing of the personal triumph if I could contribute to the victory of my friends and the discomfiture of my enemies ; less powerful motives would have sufficed to stimulate a man of quick sensibility, capable of feeling strongly both love and hatred ; and I have all my life been only too much under the influence of those passions.

Only one consideration held me back : my hope was that the Duke of Berry would marry a foreign Princess ; for such a marriage would preserve his issue, so near in succession to the Crown, from that taint of bastardy which was so abhorrent to me. But I saw that Madame la Duchesse was leaving no stone unturned to secure the Prince for Mademoiselle de Bourbon, and that while I was letting time slip away, in the vague hope of a foreign marriage, she was quietly attaining her object ; some fine morning the announcement of the approaching marriage would drop on us like a millstone, and crush me and the Princes to whom I was attached so completely that we should never raise our heads again. I saw that if the Duke of Berry was to marry in his own country the connection with bastardy was unavoidable, and this consideration determined me to take active measures.

Having come to this conclusion, I set myself to consider calmly the various obstacles in my way ; in order to see how some might be overcome and others evaded ; for it was necessary that I should myself be convinced of the

possibility of Mademoiselle's marriage before I undertook to persuade others of it, even those most immediately concerned. Long experience of important affairs had taught me that the most solid reasons often give way to momentary convenience, and I hoped to make considerable use of this motive ; so far as the general plan of campaign was concerned, I thought there was nothing for it but to oppose one cabal to another, and use stratagem as well as open force. The first thing was to make sure of the Duke and Duchess of Orleans ; I told them what Madame la Duchesse was doing, and explained to them, without mincing matters, what their situation would be if she succeeded in her designs, even during the present reign ; and how much worse it would become afterwards ; I appealed to their pride, to their jealousy ; and by dint of perseverance I succeeded at last in overcoming the natural indolence of the Duchess of Orleans so far as to induce her to pay some attention to her own pressing interests. Perhaps she was influenced less by self-interest than by jealousy of the sister who had become her bitter enemy ; however, she did listen to me, and we then consulted together as to the best way of getting the Duke of Orleans to help us.

That Prince, notwithstanding his ability, and his passionate affection for Mademoiselle, was like an inert log, which could only be stirred by our united efforts ; and so he continued to be throughout the whole course of this important affair. This extraordinary attitude of his very nearly disconcerted all our plans more than once ; the reason for it has always been a puzzle to me ; for, careless and lacking in perseverance as he was, I cannot believe that his neglect of his own interests arose entirely from his easy-going disposition. I have always suspected that, knowing more about the Spanish affair than any one else, he was convinced that it was an insuperable obstacle in the way of Mademoiselle's marriage ; and so, if he pretended to take an interest in our proceedings, it was merely to save himself the trouble of disputing with us ; knowing well, as he thought, that our schemes could come to nothing.

Seeing that I had little assistance to expect from the person chiefly interested, I set to work to form a powerful cabal ; or, rather, to combine several groups or cabals into one, which should be driven by self-interest to work strenuously for the object which I had in view—for self-interest

is the only motive which ever effects anything important in a Court. The Duchess of Burgundy, being friendly with the Duchess of Orleans and on extremely bad terms with Madame la Duchesse, was naturally disposed to favour Mademoiselle rather than Mademoiselle de Bourbon. Besides the obvious danger of increasing the influence of Madame la Duchesse over Monseigneur, there was another consideration which had weight with her. Knowing the King thoroughly as she did, she could not but be aware of the charm which novelty had for him ; indeed, she had had fortunate experience of it in her own person. She could not look forward without some uneasiness to the advent of another Princess, younger than herself, and therefore better able to amuse him with the childish ways and jokes which were no longer very suitable to her own age, though she still went on with them. She felt that the new-comer, as the bride of Monseigneur's favourite son, would be a formidable rival ; for the Duke of Berry's free way of living pleased both his father and grandfather as much as the Duke of Burgundy's austerity and preciseness repelled them. This was not all ; she feared lest the new-comer, under the guidance and influence of Madame la Duchesse, might become a dangerous domestic spy, against whom she would have to be perpetually on her guard. She quite realised how important it was that she should have as a sister-in-law a Princess with neither the power nor the wish to become her rival ; one who would be entirely under her own influence.

But though the Duchess of Burgundy was not insensible to the force of these considerations, it was necessary that she should be constantly reminded of them ; otherwise they would be speedily forgotten amid the round of duties and amusements which made up her daily life. With all her ability and good sense she was gentle, frivolous, and too easily influenced by those around her ; it was hardly to be expected that at her age she would keep her attention fixed on her future interests, however important they might be, in the midst of a whirl of dissipation and amusement. Yet I felt that with regard to the marriage no consideration would have so much weight with the King and Madame de Maintenon as that of how it would affect the Duchess of Burgundy, for she was the only person they really loved ; it was, therefore, essential that some one should keep her

in mind of her own interests ; and induce her to use her influence with the King. The Duchess of Orleans could not very well do so, as her own personal interest in the matter was too great ; I had, therefore, to look about for other instruments ; choosing as far as possible persons with private reasons for preferring Mademoiselle. The Duchess de Villeroy seemed to be admirably adapted for the purpose ; she had much good sense, and a sort of blunt perseverance better calculated to make an impression than even greater ability in a more cautious person. She had long known the Duchess of Orleans' hopes ; I had no difficulty in convincing her that the time had come for acting vigorously.

Madame de Lévi was another person who, for several reasons, seemed well qualified to influence the Duchess of Burgundy. She was extremely clever ; and her perseverance, though sometimes affected by caprices of temper, was not inferior to that of Madame de Villeroy. Like the latter, she was on very bad terms with Madame la Duchesse, and friendly with the Duchess of Orleans ; so that her personal interest was on the side of Mademoiselle. Moreover, she was a warm friend ; and, as she was very intimate with the Duchess of Burgundy, she quickly perceived how important this matter was to her, and readily agreed to do what I wanted. She was useful for other reasons ; Madame de Maintenon liked her, and she had as much influence with her as a person of her age could have. Moreover, she was much loved and esteemed by her own family, and I found her very useful in backing me up with the Dukes de Chevreuse and de Beauvilliers ; we used often to consult together how we should lay certain matters before them when it was not desirable that they should be put too plainly, or always by the same person. These two ladies were the means of securing a third ally ; not a very strong one, it is true, because she was too desirous of keeping on good terms with everybody, but useful within the limits of her capacity : I mean Madame d'O, who, for certain reasons of peculiar importance among ladies, was admitted to the intimate confidence of the Duchess of Burgundy. Her husband also helped us in his frigid, calculating way : he was attached to the Dukes de Chevreuse and de Beauvilliers, who had done him more than one good turn, especially in saving him from ruin after the campaign of Lille.

Since the death of M. le Prince, M. du Maine had regarded

Madame la Duchesse as his enemy ; he was therefore inclined to side with his other sister in this affair, and it was easy for her, in conjunction with M. d'O, to work upon his fears ; for of all the passions fear was the one which had most power over M. du Maine. They had no difficulty in showing him that the marriage of Mademoiselle de Bourbon would be for him like an abyss suddenly opened under his feet ; it would be hopeless for him to press his claims on the inheritance of M. le Prince, for Monseigneur and the Duke of Berry would no longer hesitate to declare themselves openly on the side of Madame la Duchesse ; while in the coming reign his reversions in favour of his children would very probably be cancelled, their newly granted rank would certainly be abolished, and it was extremely doubtful whether he would be allowed to retain his own. So, as he was asked to do nothing more than exert his secret influence over the King and Madame de Maintenon in the private interviews which he had with them every day, he set to work in favour of Mademoiselle ; with all the more zeal because he conceived the design of indemnifying himself by the arrangement of another marriage between one of Mademoiselle's sisters and his own son, who would thus become the Duke of Berry's brother-in-law—a design which it cost me a good deal of trouble to frustrate.

With the inclusion of M. du Maine this cabal was complete ; I thought it was sufficient to carry out my views in that particular direction ; and, as the success of the whole affair depended on secrecy, it was not desirable to include too many persons. I never had any direct intercourse with M. du Maine or with M. and Madame d'O ; but my views were conveyed to them by the Duchess of Orleans, and I heard all that they were doing through the same channel. The d'O's never even heard my name mentioned in connection with the affair. The oddest part of it was that the Duchess of Orleans herself left me to do and think of everything ; her natural indolence was such that it required an effort to get her to take any interest at all in the matter.

I did not feel quite easy about Madame de Maintenon. It was true that all her affection was given to M. du Maine and the Duchess of Burgundy ; and that she disliked Madame la Duchesse, who had shaken off her yoke as soon as she could, and sometimes made fun of her ; still, I was rather alarmed about the good understanding which had sprung

up between her and Monseigneur at the time of Chamillart's downfall, and also about the alliance between her and Mademoiselle Choin. I was also afraid of her niece, Madame de Caylus, a very clever woman, who knew her thoroughly, and had much influence over her; for she had long been attached to Madame la Duchesse, and by her means was on the best of terms with Monseigneur and all the clique who governed him. I thought therefore that, although I was quite satisfied with the machinery which I had already set in motion, so far as it went, it would be advisable to supplement it by bringing other influences to bear on a different side; for I saw that the Duke of Berry was like a fortified place, which we should only carry by sapping and mining followed by a sudden assault.

Accordingly I spoke forcibly to the Dukes de Chevreuse and de Beauvilliers, and to their wives. The arguments I relied on chiefly were the utter ruin of the Duke of Burgundy if Mademoiselle de Bourbon got the upper hand, and the dissensions which would inevitably arise between him and the Duke of Berry; instead of the brotherly union in which they lived at present, which it had always been the Duke de Beauvilliers' special care to promote. I appealed to their religious scruples against leaving a Prince of the Duke of Berry's age without a wife, and warned them of the danger of putting off his marriage in the hope of obtaining a foreign Princess. I also hinted at the consequences which might ensue from the return of Madame des Ursins, in case of the overthrow of the King of Spain; for people were already beginning to discuss that possibility in whispers; and the men I was speaking to had no wish to see that lady acquire a free hand in our Court. I spoke to them also about Madame la Duchesse and d'Antin, their declared enemies; and I saw that my words did not fall on deaf ears. In short, I made sure of the two Dukes; they promised to do what they could, they consulted me on every point, and let me know almost every day what they were doing. This was no slight triumph with people like them, so cautious, so scrupulous, so difficult of access; they were like monks who professed to have no influence, and to be indifferent to the affairs of this world; but now and then they remembered that they were not bound by any irrevocable vows.

Having secured these allies I turned to another quarter no less important: I mean the Jesuits. The affair of my

projected embassy to Rome, in which d'Antin was my rival, had shown me how much they hated and feared him ; and I had reason to know that they felt the same dislike and distrust for Madame la Duchesse. I also knew that they had a sort of liking for the Duke of Orleans which I had done my best to encourage. I thought it would not be difficult to turn these fortunate partialities of theirs to good account, so I induced the Duke and Duchess of Orleans to confide their wishes to Father du Trevoux. This Jesuit had been Monsieur's confessor ; and though the Duke of Orleans, leading the life he did, was not likely to have recourse to him for spiritual advice, he nevertheless kept him on as his titular confessor, and consulted him with regard to nominations to the Abbeyes and other benefices of his apanage. This Father du Trevoux, a gentleman of a good Breton family, was a rather absurd little man, good-natured, but with little sense or ability ; in spite of which he had become the intimate friend of Father Tellier, who had so few friends, even among his own Society.

But there were certain things which the Duke and Duchess of Orleans could not very well talk about themselves, and others which they could not confide to a man of his limited intelligence ; with respect to these I came to their assistance through Father Sanadon, another close friend of Father Tellier's. I took care, however, not to tell them that I had done so ; for I did not wish them to know all the machinery I was setting in motion, lest they should leave everything to me, and make no efforts of their own. I repeated to Father Sanadon all that they said to Father du Trevoux, with such additions and commentaries as I thought most likely to convince the Jesuits that it was for their interest to promote a marriage between the Duke of Berry and Mademoiselle, and to alarm them about Mademoiselle de Bourbon. All this was faithfully repeated to Father Tellier ; and though I was myself in a position to talk to him freely, they made more impression coming from the mouth of a trusty Jesuit than from mine.

The Jesuits never consider anything so trifling as to be unworthy of their attention, certainly not anything connected with important affairs ; they took up the cause of Mademoiselle's marriage as if it had been their own, and of their own accord entered into our councils and assisted us in carrying out our plans. When I say the Jesuits, I mean

Father Tellier and that small select council to which, though its existence is unknown to the bulk of the Society, all really important affairs are entrusted. They rendered us most valuable assistance ; which was doubly fortunate, because they had the entire confidence of the Dukes de Chevreuse and de Beauvilliers in a matter which touched them on a very tender point. It will be remembered that when the storm arose about Quietism, the cunning Society took opposite sides. The majority, including Fathers de la Chaise, Bourdaloue, and La Rue, the Jesuits of the Court and society in short, were opposed to the Archbishop of Cambrai, but took no active part against him. The minority, including what may be called their secret Sanhedrim, sided with that prelate ; and in secret did all they could to help him. In this way the good Fathers avoided giving offence either to the Court of Rome or to the Court of France, and in the meantime pursued their own objects. The Secret Council, in which Father Tellier was a leading spirit, always remained faithful to the Archbishop of Cambrai ; and this, though I did not know it at the time, was the reason which chiefly influenced the two Dukes in their selection of him for the post of confessor to the King. I was quite aware of it, however, at the time of these intrigues about the marriage ; and this was the secret of the good understanding between Father Tellier and the two Dukes which made their support of Mademoiselle's marriage of greater importance than was suspected even by some of those most deeply engaged in the intrigue.

I was talking one day to the Duke of Orleans at the time when he was just setting out for Italy, and the conversation happened to turn on the Archbishop of Cambrai. The Prince let fall the remark that if, by some inconceivable chance, he ever happened to find himself at the head of the State, the first thing he would do would be to send for that prelate, and give him an important share in the administration of public affairs. I took care to repeat this remark to the two Dukes, and it aroused in them a feeling of good-will towards the Duke of Orleans which ripened into attachment. The Duke de Chevreuse had already some intimacy with him ; partly because his son, the poor Duke de Montfort, had been his friend ; partly from a common love of science, a subject which he liked to discuss with the Duke of Orleans, because he always brought the

conversation round to religion, to which he hoped to convert him. These considerations, however, would never have induced these two virtuous men to support the marriage of Mademoiselle if there had been the slightest hope of obtaining a foreign Princess for the Duke of Berry, or if they had not been firmly convinced that his marriage with Mademoiselle de Bourbon would be full of danger for the Duke of Burgundy and for the State. This secret bond of union between some of my chief allies was a very fortunate circumstance. I took care not to reveal all I knew of it either to the indolence of the Duchess of Orleans, or to her careless and indiscreet husband.

Besides all these coadjutors I thought it advisable to enlist another, who, though out of favour with the King, was held in just esteem by the public, and had frequent access to Madame de Maintenon. I mean Marshal Boufflers ; who, if he could be persuaded to take a favourable view of Mademoiselle's marriage, would be capable of rendering valuable assistance. I was glad of an opportunity to get him to act in conjunction with the Duke de Beauvilliers, and thus quietly deprive the Cabal of the *seigneurs* of his assistance in case, either from self-interest or merely from opposition to the Duke de Beauvilliers, they took it into their heads to oppose Mademoiselle's marriage. Boufflers was already well disposed towards the Duke of Orleans, because that Prince had taken him into his confidence at the time of his rupture with Madame d'Argenton ; and I had no difficulty in persuading him to help us. He had another reason for supporting Mademoiselle : he knew that d'Antin was closely allied with Madame la Duchesse. Now d'Antin was a friend of Marshal Villars, and we have seen how ill-naturedly he spoke of Boufflers after the battle of Malplaquet. He was, therefore, delighted to find that the arguments in favour of Mademoiselle were such that he could conscientiously support the marriage ; and he promised to do so to the utmost of his power. There was a great convenience in dealing with Marshal Boufflers ; with him, to make a promise and to carry it out were one and the same thing ; and, moreover, to an intimate friend like myself he would say frankly what he could do, and what he could not ; so that one was never in danger of making false calculations where he was concerned.

Such were the forces and the combination of forces which

my zeal on behalf of my friends, my hatred for Madame la Duchesse, and my regard for my own future prospects led me to enrol and set in motion. The season of Lent gave me an interval of leisure during which I brought my various machines to perfection, and got them to work smoothly and in combination. I was in constant communication with those who were working with me ; from them I heard all that was going on, and knew at once if any hitch had occurred, and every day I took the necessary measures to ensure combined and harmonious action.

By the time Lent was nearly over the Duchess of Burgundy had sounded the King and Madame de Maintenon. She found the latter well disposed towards Mademoiselle ; the King seemed indifferent. One day Mademoiselle had been brought to see the King in Madame de Maintenon's room, Monseigneur being present ; the Duchess of Burgundy made some kind remarks to her, and when she had left the room said, in the giddy and impulsive manner which she sometimes adopted intentionally, that Mademoiselle would be just the wife for the Duke of Berry. Monseigneur became crimson with anger, and replied sharply that such a marriage would indeed be a good way of rewarding the Duke of Orleans for all his doings in Spain. Thereupon he went abruptly out of the room, leaving the rest of the party in great astonishment at such an outburst from a Prince usually so phlegmatic and cautious.

The Duchess of Burgundy had only spoken as she did to see how Monseigneur would take it ; she was clever and bold to the end. Turning with a startled expression to Madame de Maintenon, "Aunt," she exclaimed, "have I said something silly ?" The King, who was much annoyed, answered for Madame de Maintenon ; he said that if Madame la Duchesse was going to take things in that fashion, and intended to put Monseigneur in leading-strings, she would have to reckon with him. Madame de Maintenon cleverly added fuel to his anger by commenting on Monseigneur's unusual touchiness ; saying that, since Madame la Duchesse's influence had already produced such an effect upon him, there was no saying what she might not do in the future. The conversation was continued in the same strain for some little time ; the damage it did to Mademoiselle de Bourbon was more than sufficient to counterbalance the advantage she derived from Monseigneur's affection for Madame la Duchesse.

The Duchess of Burgundy lost no time in telling the Duchess of Orleans what had occurred, and she repeated the story to me. It confirmed me in my belief that we must push our attack on Monseigneur with vigour by working on the King's jealousy ; by making him think that before long Monseigneur would become a personage to be taken into account, and that he would be forced to comply with all his demands, or rather such demands as Madame la Duchesse chose to dictate ; so that, instead of being absolute master in his own family, he would find himself in his old age subjected to a humiliating and ever-increasing bondage. I thought it equally necessary to work on Madame de Maintenon's fears ; and show her the possibility of Madame la Duchesse, who hated her, regaining the King's favour through her daughter and the artifices of d'Antin ; and the consequent diminution of her own influence. I got the Duchess de Villeroy and Madame de Lévi to point out these possibilities to the Duchess of Burgundy ; M. de Beauvilliers spoke in the same strain to the Duke of Burgundy ; Marshal Boufflers to Madame de Maintenon ; and Father Tellier to the King himself. This pressure, brought to bear from so many quarters, produced a good effect ; and, the business having reached this stage, I thought we had better leave it alone for a while, and not spoil it by injudicious fussiness. The Duchess of Burgundy's remark, and Monseigneur's touchy reply, were sure to have aroused the attention of Madame la Duchesse, and put her on her guard ; by keeping quiet we might lull her suspicions, and let her relapse into that feeling of fancied security which she derived from her confidence in her own strength, and her contempt of the forces opposed to her.

Holy Week had now arrived ; I went as usual to La Ferté, and thence straight to Marly ; it was the first time the King had been there since the audience he had given me. I repeat this in order to fix the dates of the various stages of this important intrigue. On arriving at Marly I found everybody uneasy ; the King was so put out about something that, completely under control as his emotions usually were, he could not conceal his trouble. The general opinion of the Court was that some fresh misfortune had occurred, which he could not make up his mind to announce. After four or five days we heard what was the matter : the King had been informed that the public at Paris and else-

where were complaining bitterly of the waste of money at Marly, at a time when the finances could not meet the necessary expenses of a disastrous war ; and, though he had often heard the same thing before, this time it made him extremely angry, for no particular reason that I ever heard of. He was so much annoyed that Madame de Maintenon had the greatest difficulty in dissuading him from returning to Versailles on the spot, although it had been announced that the Court would remain at Marly for three weeks at least.

In the end he gave out, with rather bitter satisfaction, that he would no longer defray the expense of feeding ladies at Marly ; he would dine alone as at Versailles ; he would sup with his family at a table laid for sixteen persons, and the vacancies would be filled by ladies who would be warned for that duty in the morning ; the Princesses of his family would each have a table for ladies they brought with them, and Madame Voysin and Madame Desmarets would also each have a table, so that ladies who did not like dining in their own rooms might have somewhere to go. He added angrily that, in future, no works would be carried on at Marly, there would be nothing but trifling amusements. In this way he would spend no more than he did at Versailles, and would at any rate have a right to go to Marly as much as he pleased, without giving any one reason to find fault.

He was wrong in his calculations from beginning to end ; nobody was taken in by them except himself. Indeed, it is doubtful whether even he was really deceived, except in thinking that he would be able to impose on the public. It became necessary to establish tables, as at Versailles, for the servants, who had hitherto lived on what was left from the three tables served twice a day in a small saloon for the King and the ladies. New kitchens had to be arranged for the Princesses, which were taken out of the old buildings ; to make up for the loss of accommodation new buildings were put up, and on a larger scale, so as to take in more people. In short, the saving turned out to be a delusion ; our enemies scoffed insultingly at this attempt at retrenchment ; the people went on murmuring ; and the delays and interruptions to public business became more inconvenient than ever, because the King thought he could now go to Marly as often as he liked, with a clear conscience, and stay there as long as he pleased.

Madame la Duchesse, though in the first months of her

mourning, had with some difficulty obtained the King's leave to come to Marly ; for she did not wish to lose sight of Monseigneur, knowing the danger of an interruption in their intimacy. She asked to be allowed to bring two of her daughters with her, Mademoiselle de Bourbon and Mademoiselle de Charolais ; and the King consented. The reason she alleged was that it would be a saving of expense to have them with her, as otherwise she had to provide for them at Versailles, and leave part of her household with them ; her real reason was to amuse Monseigneur, as she could not have card-playing for him in her rooms in these early days of her widowhood, and to prevent him from being too much with the Duchess of Burgundy ; and also to accustom the King to seeing her daughters, for they must necessarily sup with him very often. Having granted this permission, the King, who never liked to make distinctions between his daughters, proposed to the Duchess of Orleans that she should bring Mademoiselle with her to Marly. This proposal was the subject of a long deliberation between the Duke and Duchess of Orleans and myself. Having discussed the question in all its bearings, we agreed that it would be better to let Mademoiselle stay at Versailles, and not mind Mademoiselle de Bourbon fluttering about Monseigneur, spending her days in the same saloon as the Duke of Berry, playing cards with him, and attracting the admiration of the Court.¹ Her marriage would not be brought about by such trifles as these : whereas it was quite possible that Mademoiselle's chances might be spoilt if she went to Marly ; for she would be exposed to every kind of malicious attack and ill-natured talk on the part of the cabal, supported by Monseigneur himself, and the result might be to set the Duke of Berry against her. We came to the conclusion, therefore, that the invitation should be declined with thanks ; and the King highly approved of this refusal.

In these circumstances I felt that we must push ahead without loss of time, for I saw the danger of these fresh manœuvres on the part of Madame la Duchesse ; the longer the affair dragged on, the worse for Mademoiselle's chances.

¹ She was very pretty. Madame says : " Madame la Duchesse herself is not prettier than her daughters, but she is more graceful and her manners are more agreeable. . . . I always compare her to a beautiful cat, which lets its claws be felt, even in play. It is impossible to dance better than Madame la Duchesse and her daughters ; but the mother is the best dancer. I do not know how it is, but even her lameness is becoming."

The Duchess of Burgundy was of the same opinion ; so were Father Tellier, with whom I often conferred, and the Duke de Beauvilliers. Marshal Boufflers also agreed with us, and spoke to Madame de Maintenon, with good effect. The Duchess of Orleans was unwell and unable to leave her room. I succeeded in persuading her to send a message to the Duchess of Burgundy, asking her to be good enough to come up to her. I say I succeeded in persuading her ; because, whether from timidity or indolence, it required a positive effort to get her to do anything, although her heart was set on the marriage. The Duchess of Burgundy went up to her room and remained with her more than an hour.

The frequent conferences between the Duchess de Villeroy, Madame de Lévi, M. and Madame d'O, and the Duchess of Burgundy, and mine with the Duchess of Orleans (which, however, were less generally known, though they took place at all sorts of hours), had already aroused the curiosity of inquisitive and idle courtiers ; now that they were followed by this long private interview between the Duchesses of Burgundy and Orleans, Madame la Duchesse took the alarm. The first visible consequence was that Monseigneur was ruder than ever to the Duke of Orleans, cold in his manner to the Duchess of Burgundy, silent and stiff with the King, as if he wished to avoid being spoken to. This made me still more anxious to push matters on. Having ascertained that everything was in good train, and made sure of Madame de Maintenon's assistance, the Duchess of Orleans and I proposed to the Duke of Orleans that he should ask the King's consent to the marriage of the Duke of Berry with Mademoiselle. He recoiled from the very suggestion of such a thing ; we kept on pressing him almost unceasingly for a day and a half, fortifying our own opinions with those of the Duchess of Burgundy, Madame de Maintenon, Marshal Boufflers, and Father Tellier : at last he told us straight out that he really could not do it ; it was absurd, he said, to talk of any marriage for the Duke of Berry at such a time of war and misery, and the idea of marrying him to his daughter was the wildest and maddest of all. The Duchess of Orleans was strangely taken aback by this flat refusal ; for my part, it only made me angry. I said so many gratuitous follies were committed every day that I did not see why he should despair of one being committed for his

benefit ; and the matter was of such vital importance to him that he might at least ask for one. It was of no use ; after a long argument he said frankly that he had not courage or impudence enough to ask the King in person ; and if he did so in his present state of mind, he should only make a mess of it, and spoil the whole business.

I then proposed a compromise ; I begged him, since he was determined not to speak to the King, at any rate to write to him, and give the letter into his own hands. The Duchess of Orleans approved highly of this suggestion, which indeed she had made herself, when we first discussed the subject. I had argued against writing, thinking a request would be put better and more forcibly by word of mouth ; but she was all in favour of a letter, which, she said, could be read over more than once, probably among persons favourable to its contents ; and the result showed that she was right. The Duke of Orleans consented to write a letter, and, fearing lest he might change his mind, I begged him to do it at once. He went out, to go to his own quarters ; as he was leaving the room the Duchess said to me, in a tone of distress, “ You surely will not leave him ? ” and then added : “ Will not you write ? ” meaning that she wanted me to compose the letter ; so I followed him to his rooms. He never had pen, ink, or paper there ; he told a servant to bring writing materials, and they brought us some, of very bad quality. He proposed that we should compose the letter together, but we had not got farther than the first line when I saw it would not do ; I suggested that we should each write one, and then we could afterwards correct and combine them as we pleased. Thereupon I sat down to write, which I did rapidly and without pausing ; but when I had got about half-way through, happening to look up as I dipped my pen in the ink, I saw that he had not written a single word, but was lying back in his chair, quietly watching me. I told him what I thought of him in a word or two, and went on writing ; he said, by way of excuse, that he felt no more capable of writing than of speaking. I would not argue the point, but finished the letter.

I then read it out to the Duke of Orleans who said, either from indolence or because he really thought so, that it was admirable and required no alterations. As I had written it in a very small hand, which I always use when I wish to write quickly, I distrusted his bad eyesight, and

gave him the letter to see whether he could read it. It was just as well that I did so, for he found he could make nothing of it ; so I took it away to my own rooms, intending to make a copy in a larger hand, which I promised to bring him that evening, in the Duchess of Orleans' rooms. I was to sup with Pontchartrain ; it was late before I had finished the copy, and I found the company already at table ; I took my leave directly supper was over, in order to go to the Duchess of Orleans. This engagement of mine gave rise to two slight inconveniences which annoyed me, though they were unavoidable. Pontchartrain was insufferably inquisitive ; he was always prying and ferreting out what people were doing ; his best friends just as much as others. My late arrival and early departure aroused his curiosity, and that of his guests, though they could not have detected anything unusual in my manner during supper. He plied me well with questions afterwards, but got no information out of me. The other annoyance was that it was so late when I arrived at the Duchess of Orleans' rooms that the King had already retired. They were waiting impatiently for me, and wanted to keep me, to read the letter to them ; but I did not wish to be seen coming out of her room at a late hour ; I therefore simply left the copy, and came away at once. My precaution was of no avail ; it became known that I had been there, and curiosity was aroused ; but it did not receive much satisfaction.

When I saw them again next morning the Duke of Orleans had taken a fresh copy in his own handwriting, and his letter was sealed and ready. They both thanked me warmly, and told me that, with a few trifling alterations, they had copied my letter word for word. The next thing was to find a suitable opportunity for giving it to the King, and that was no easy matter. The secret was confided to the Duchess of Burgundy, and through her to Madame de Maintenon ; and they both urged that there should be no delay : when I say the secret, I mean that of the existence of the letter, not that of its real author. It was necessary to find a conjunction of favourable circumstances ; the King must be in a good humour, and so, notwithstanding her favourable disposition, must Madame de Maintenon ; then, it must be a day when she happened to be at Marly ; for she went nearly every day to St. Cyr, and on those days the King did not see her till the evening. We had also to choose

a day when Father Tellier came to Marly, which was usually a Wednesday, though sometimes he came from Thursday to Saturday. Lastly, it was necessary that the letter should be delivered without the knowledge of d'Antin, who was nearly always in the private rooms ; for so unusual an occurrence would certainly arouse his suspicions, and he would at once give the alarm to Monseigneur and Madame la Duchesse. Such a combination of circumstances was not easy to find ; nevertheless, it did present itself on the following Friday and Saturday ; but the Duke of Orleans, though he always carried the letter about in his pocket, could not screw up courage to deliver it.

In the meantime the Duchess of Burgundy was continually urging the Duchess of Orleans to make haste, and she did so on behalf of Madame de Maintenon as well as herself. At last, on the next Friday, I heard from Maréchal that the King had been in a very cheerful humour at his *lever* ; Madame de Maintenon was at Marly for the day ; so was Father Tellier ; and, by great good luck, d'Antin had gone off to Paris. I found the Duke of Orleans in the saloon, just as the King came back from Mass and was going into Madame de Maintenon's room, as he always did when she was not at St. Cyr. I asked him how long he meant to keep his letter in his pocket, adding that people had noticed his moody and preoccupied expression, and were beginning to suspect something ; especially as the Duchess of Burgundy's visit to the Duchess of Orleans, and our frequent conferences, had already attracted attention. He would, and he would not ; he could not make up his mind. We spent fully three quarters of an hour in dispute like this, in the saloon, which at this time of the day was filled with all the principal courtiers, and I trembled lest they should notice us.

At last the King came out of Madame de Maintenon's room and went into his own apartments ; and the crowd left the great saloon to follow him into the small one, and into his own room. Then I urged the Duke of Orleans, with all the force I could muster, to go in and deliver his letter. He would advance towards the small saloon, and then jib, turning his tail to the manger, so to speak. I kept on shouldering him towards the small saloon, still exhorting him ; and every time he turned tail I got round him, so that he was still between me and the door. This manœuvre was

repeated so many times that I was on thorns, because of a few inferior persons who had remained behind in the great saloon, and because the courtiers in the small one could see us through the glass door, pirouetting in this fashion. At last, by dint of talking and pushing, I got him into the small saloon ; and, not without some further trouble, up to the door of the King's room, which was open. Then there was no help for it, he had to go on to the private room ; it only remained to be seen whether he would have courage enough to deliver the letter.

I went slowly into the King's room, so as not to cross it with him ; I went to the window nearest to the door of the private room, and there sat down, with M. de Bouillon, M. de la Rochefoucauld, the Duke de Tresmes, and the First Equerry ; who were waiting for the King to come out and change his clothes before going for a walk in the gardens. I had not been there more than the space of three or four Paternosters when, to my astonishment, I saw the Duke of Orleans come out ; he passed quickly through the room, and disappeared. I merely rose and sat down again like the others ; but I was much disturbed in my mind as to what could have happened during that short interval. It was some time before the King came out ; at last he did so, changed his coat, and went out for his walk. I followed him, observing his demeanour attentively. No man ever had greater control over himself ; but, as he could not possibly suspect that any one among his suite knew that the Duke of Orleans was to give him a letter, I wanted to see whether he looked in a good humour, or grave and thoughtful. There was absolutely nothing to be gathered from his manner, which was just as usual ; so that I was very uneasy about the fate of the letter.

After a few turns in the garden the King stopped by the carp basin, Madame la Duchesse being at his side. The Duke of Orleans then joined the party, but without drawing very near to the King ; who moved on again before long, to continue his walk elsewhere. I kept myself in the background, as did the Duke of Orleans ; for we were both impatient to speak to each other. He told me that he had delivered the letter ; the King, taken by surprise, asked him what he wanted, to which he had replied that it was nothing to displease him ; that it was a matter about which he could not very well speak to him, but his letter would explain it ;

whereupon the King said, more graciously, that he would read it attentively. The Duke of Orleans then withdrew, so that the King's first impression of curiosity might not have time to cool down; he cast a glance behind him as he was approaching the door, and saw that the King was opening the letter.

My anxiety being thus relieved, we mingled with the courtiers who were following the King, so as not to be noticed together. I felt greatly relieved to hear that the decisive step had been taken; but I confess it was not without emotion that I waited to see what would be the success of my labours. I was not kept long in suspense: next morning the Duke of Orleans told me that the King had spoken to him, saying that he had read his letter through twice, and thought it worthy of consideration; he was glad he had written instead of speaking to him; he wished to give him satisfaction, but there would be a difficulty with Monseigneur; he must choose his own time for mentioning the matter to him. I heard also from the Duchess of Orleans that the King had discussed the letter on the previous evening with Madame de Maintenon and the Duchess of Burgundy, and shown himself favourable; they had consulted together as to the best way of overcoming Monseigneur's opposition, and decided that his consent must be obtained by kindness and persuasion. The King himself undertook to speak to Monseigneur, when he saw a favourable opportunity, in hopes that his influence might prevail, for Monseigneur had never been able to say "no" to him in his life. The Duchess of Orleans heard all this from the Duchess of Burgundy herself. A few days later we heard from Father du Trévoux that the King had spoken favourably of the letter to Father Tellier, and that the confessor had approved of his sentiments, encouraged him to speak to Monseigneur, and urged him to bring the matter to a conclusion as quickly as possible.

In this fortunate position of affairs I thought the Duke and Duchess of Orleans would do well not to show any undue eagerness; for now that the King had given such a formal promise it could do no good, and might do a great deal of harm. It was very desirable that their behaviour should betray nothing unusual, so as not to disturb the fancied security of Madame la Duchesse and her friends, who little thought that a loaded mine was under their feet,

the train already lighted, and that only a brief interval remained before the explosion took place. The Duke and Duchess of Orleans agreed with me, and concealed their joy in public. It was boundless, and I rejoiced with them ; yet in my joy there was a dash of bitterness.

END OF VOL. III

order ; but, not prevailing, he went off in a fury to Villers-Cotteret. But he could not go on making a public display of his discontent for such a disgraceful cause ; moreover, the King did his best to appease him by presents of money and other marks of kindness ; so after a time he returned, though with a heavy heart, and lived with Madame as usual.

D'Effiat, First Equerry to Monsieur, and Beuvron, captain of his guards, were in close alliance with the Chevalier de Lorraine ; his absence interfered very much with their private designs of getting as much money as possible out of Monsieur, and made them fear the rise of some new favourite who might not be so well disposed towards them. They could see no probability of his banishment coming to an end ; Madame was in higher favour than ever ; she was beginning to take part in public affairs, and had just returned from a mysterious expedition to England, where she had been successful in negotiating a treaty with the King her brother. The Chevalier de Lorraine in the meantime was travelling in Italy. I do not know which of the three first thought of it ; but he sent his two friends a sure and speedy poison by the hands of a messenger, who perhaps did not know what he was carrying.

Madame was at St. Cloud. She was in the habit of refreshing herself about seven in the evening with a glass of chicory-water ; one of her pages used to make it for her, and put it in a cupboard in an ante-chamber. It was in a china pot, and by its side was another of plain water, to mix with the chicory-water in case Madame found it too bitter. This ante-chamber was used as a passage by persons going to Madame's rooms ; no servant was stationed in it permanently. The Marquis d'Effiat had made himself acquainted with all these particulars. On the 29th of June, 1670, he found the opportunity he desired ; there was no one in the ante-chamber ; he went to the cupboard, threw the contents of his packet into the chicory-water, then, hearing somebody coming, he took up the pot of plain water. The page who attended to the chicory-water came in and asked him what he was doing there. D'Effiat, without showing any sign of embarrassment, apologised, said he was dying of thirst, and, knowing that there was water in the cupboard, he could not resist taking some. The page still grumbled, but d'Effiat, with renewed apologies, went on

to Madame's room, and began talking to the other courtiers there without the slightest sign of emotion. What followed an hour later is only too well known, and made a great stir throughout Europe.

Madame died next morning at three o'clock, to the intense grief of the King. It would seem that his suspicions were aroused during the day ; the page perhaps mentioned what he had seen ; at any rate, the King had a notion that Purnon, first *maître-d'hôtel* to Madame, was in the secret ; for, notwithstanding his humble position, he was on confidential terms with d'Effiat. The King went to bed as usual, but got up again ; sent for Brissac, an officer in his guards, and ordered him to have Purnon arrested at once, and brought to his room by a private entrance.

As soon as the King saw him he sent Brissac and his *valet-de-chambre* out of the room ; then, assuming an air which struck terror, and looking at Purnon from head to foot : " Listen to me, my friend," he said ; " if you make a full confession, and answer the exact truth to the questions I put to you, you shall be pardoned, whatever crime you may have committed, and you shall never hear of it again. But take care that you do not attempt to conceal the truth from me in the slightest particular ; for, if you do, you shall die before you leave this house. Now, was Madame poisoned ? " " Yes, Sire," replied Purnon. " And who poisoned her ? and how was it done ? " said the King. Purnon explained how the Chevalier de Lorraine had sent the poison to d'Effiat and Beuvron, and told the story of the chicory-water. Then the King, repeating his threats and promises, said : " Did my brother know what was going on ? " " No, Sire," said Purnon, " we were not so foolish as to tell him ; he cannot keep a secret, and he would have ruined us." At this answer the King made a great " Ha ! " like a man relieved from an oppression to his breathing. " That is all I wanted to know," he said ; and, calling in Brissac, told him to take the man away and set him at liberty.

Purnon himself told this story many years afterwards to M. Joli-de-Fleuri, *procureur-général* to the Parliament, who told it to me. I happened to talk about this matter again with M. Joli-de-Fleuri, and he then told me something which he had not mentioned on the former occasion, namely, that a few days after Monsieur's second marriage

the King took Madame aside, and told her the whole story, adding that he wished to reassure her with regard to Monsieur. As for himself, he said, he would not have been so dishonourable as to allow her to marry his brother if he had believed him to be capable of such a crime. Madame profited by his information. Purnon still held the same office of *maître-d'hôtel*. After a time, with the consent of Monsieur, she made inquiries into the household expenditure, and gave Purnon so many worries that she forced him to give up his office ; he sold it in 1674 to a M. Maurel de Vaubonne.

The King of Spain sent an Ambassador to Turin to sign the contract of marriage between himself and the Princess of Savoy. The Prince of Carignan, the famous deaf-mute, so celebrated for his wisdom and capacity, was to act as his proxy at the marriage ; and Almonacid, the same Ambassador, was to escort the Princess to Spain. It became necessary to choose a "Camarera-major," and it was a matter for some consideration, for the lady chosen would have practically to educate and form the character of the young Queen. A Spanish lady might not prove trustworthy, and the Queen might take a prejudice against her ; a lady of our own Court would not be suitable ; finally, the choice fell on the Princess des Ursins.

She was by birth a Frenchwoman, of the House of La Trémouille. She was a childless widow ; her husband, the head of the Ursini family, and a Grandee of Spain, had been recognised as the first layman of Rome. She herself had been in Spain, and most of her life had been passed at Rome ; but she had made sojourns in France sufficiently long to enable her to make many friends at our Court, where she was well known. Since her husband's death she had not been well off. She was very intimate with both the Duchess of Savoy and with the Queen of Portugal, sister of the Dowager-Duchess. Cardinal d'Estrées, their relation, had been the means of forming this friendship ; he had always been on intimate terms with the Princess des Ursins. Her choice was perhaps finally decided by the information which he gave that Cardinal Portocarrero had been very much in love with her at Rome, and was still one of her greatest friends. It was through this Cardinal that the government of Spain had to be carried on ; the Camarera-major would necessarily

have constant relations with him ; and it was considered fortunate that a lady could be found for that important office who was already on good terms with him.

I have on a former occasion said enough about her family, her first marriage, and her history in general. It is sufficient now to say that her age, bodily constitution, and appearance were exactly suitable for her new office. In person she was rather above the ordinary height ; dark, with blue eyes full of expression ; her figure was perfect, and her face, though not strictly beautiful, charming. Her manners were very dignified, and there was something majestic about her whole appearance ; yet it was extraordinary what easy grace, both of body and mind, she contrived to show in everything she did, even the most trifling actions ; in this respect I have never seen any one who came near her. She was extremely clever, in every possible way. She always liked to please, merely for the sake of pleasing ; but when she laid herself out to attract and captivate any one it was impossible to resist her ; she could flatter and caress in the most insinuating way, yet always with tact and judgement, always with an air of dignity which attracted instead of repelling. Her conversation was delightful and inexhaustible ; it was moreover very amusing, for she had travelled much and known many people. Her voice and manner of talking were gentle and agreeable ; she had read a great deal, and reflected deeply on what she read.

All her life had been passed in the best society ; she thoroughly understood the art of entertaining, and was quite capable of holding a Court ; she was always polite, but knew how to make distinctions ; above all, she never lost sight of her own advancement, and was careful to advance only with dignity and discretion. No one in the world was better fitted for intrigues ; she had always been mixed up in them at Rome by her own choice. Her ambition was unbounded, but it was not the usual petty ambition of her sex ; it was far higher than that of most men ; she thought only of acquiring power and attaining a position in which she might govern. Her weaknesses were gallantry and personal vanity ; these she retained even in extreme old age ; she used, in consequence, to wear ornaments which were always too youthful for her.

Her real nature was haughty and proud. Her mind was always set upon her object, and she was not too particu-

lar as to the means she employed, though she always endeavoured, as far as possible, to do everything politely and with good breeding. She was also by nature really good-natured and obliging; but she would have nothing by halves; she meant her friends to devote themselves to her heart and soul; she herself was a true and eager friend, and no length of absence could make her forget her friendship. In like manner, she was a cruel and implacable enemy, carrying her hatreds even beyond the grave. She knew how to keep her own secrets, and could be thoroughly trusted with those of her friends. She had a natural and agreeable gaiety which never went beyond becoming limits; indeed, in all outward observances she had an extreme regard for what was decent and becoming; she even extended it to private matters in which it might be dispensed with; at all times, and whatever she might be doing, her equable disposition left her completely mistress of herself.

Such was this celebrated woman who ruled the Court and monarchy of Spain so openly and for so many years. Her reign and her downfall made so much noise in the world that I have thought it right to describe her at some length in order to make her known and give a true notion of her character. She was naturally pleased at being chosen to fill a position which opened up a career so much to her liking; but she was clever enough to see that it was only offered her because no one else could be found with so many necessary qualifications; and that, when it had once been offered, she would not be allowed to refuse it. She therefore made rather a favour of accepting it; showing just so much hesitation as caused her acceptance to be received with gratitude, but not enough to make it appear that she did it with a bad grace. She went from Rome to Genoa, and thence to Villefranche, where she was to await the Queen.

The marriage took place by proxy at Turin on the 11th of September, and two days later the new Queen started for Spain. She was brought by French galleys to Nice, and thence she was to go in a Spanish galley to Barcelona; but when she arrived at Nice she was so tired of the sea¹ that she insisted on completing her journey by land. Her graciousness and self-possession, the propriety and

¹ She was devoured by bugs on board the galley.

politeness of her replies, and the discerning curiosity which she showed were surprising in so young a Princess, and gave the Princess des Ursins great hopes for the future.

On her arrival at the frontier of Roussillon Louville came to pay his respects and to bring her presents from the King, who came to meet her at Figueras, two days' journey from Barcelona. Her Spanish household met her at the frontier, and her own ladies went back. She felt the separation much more keenly than the Duchess of Burgundy had done ; she wept bitterly, and seemed frightened among so many strange faces ; Madame des Ursins was the only person she knew, and she had only made her acquaintance a few days before. On arriving at Figueras the King met on horseback, and rode by the side of her carriage ; in the embarrassment of this first meeting Madame des Ursins was of great assistance to both of them, though she was quite unknown to the King, and as yet had hardly seen anything of the Queen.

At Figueras the Bishop of the diocese married them over again with little ceremonial, and soon afterwards they sat down to supper, served by Madame des Ursins and the ladies of the Palace, half the dishes being after the Spanish fashion, half after the French. This mixture was displeasing to the ladies ; in combination with some Spanish noblemen, they determined to mark their displeasure, and the method they adopted was really scandalous. Under pretext that the dishes were too heavy or too hot, or that they had been clumsily handed to the ladies, every French dish was upset before it reached the table, while every Spanish dish arrived there safely. The displeasure of the ladies was too clearly shown in their sulky faces to be ignored ; but the King and Queen very wisely pretended not to notice anything, and Madame des Ursins, though much surprised, said not a word.

After a long and tiresome meal the King and Queen retired. Then all the Queen's feelings which had been pent up during supper broke out, and she began to cry for her Piedmontese ladies. Like a child, as she was, she gave herself up for lost on finding herself in the hands of these insolent strangers ; and when it was a question of going to bed she refused positively, and declared she would return home. Her attendants did what they could to comfort her, but to their great embarrassment she was not to be

persuaded. The King was already undressed and waiting. At last Madame des Ursins had to go and tell him and Marchin what had happened. The King was angry and disappointed. All his life he had practised the most scrupulous self-restraint; for that very reason he had found the Princess to his liking; he was, therefore, much annoyed at her whim, but flattered himself that she would forget it before the next night. It was fortunate that Spanish customs do not permit even the nearest relations to see a newly married pair put to bed; so that what might have caused an unpleasant scandal remained a secret known only to Madame des Ursins, Louville, Marchin, and one or two ladies'-maids. The King and his bride did not meet till next morning, after they were dressed.

In the meanwhile, Louville and Marchin consulted with Madame des Ursins as to the best way of dealing with a child capable of forming such decided resolutions, and announcing them with so much force and obstinacy. The night was passed in reasoning with her, and after promises had been given with regard to what had passed at supper she relented, and consented to remain Queen. Next morning the Duke of Medina Sidonia and the Count de San Estevan were consulted. They were of opinion that, in order to mortify her and reduce her to obedience, the King should refuse to sleep with the Queen the following night; and their advice was acted upon. The pair did not see each other in private all day. When night came the Queen was much distressed, her childish pride and vanity were mortified; perhaps also she had taken a fancy to the King. The Ladies of the Palace were spoken to seriously, as were certain noblemen who were suspected of aiding and abetting them; they were compelled to make humble apologies and promise better behaviour for the future. The third day passed off quietly, and the third night was more agreeable for the young couple. On the fourth day, everything being now in good order, the King and Queen entered Barcelona, where nothing was talked of but festivities and amusements.

Before leaving Madrid the King of Spain had ordered the Dukes of Arcos and Baños, who were brothers, to go to serve in the army in Flanders, as a punishment. They were the only Grantees of Spain who expressed displeasure at the arrangement agreed upon between our King and his grand-

son with regard to our Dukes and Grandees of Spain, putting them on an equality and giving them reciprocal honours in their respective countries. All the other Grandees had expressed approval, whether they felt it or not ; only these two young men presented a remonstrance to the King of Spain. It was respectfully worded ; but it had no effect except to bring this punishment upon them. Their colleagues blamed them, but perhaps some of them would have done the same thing if they had thought it would have any effect. The two young Dukes obeyed, and on their journey through France were well received by the King. They were the first Grandees of Spain to kiss the Duchess of Burgundy and share other privileges enjoyed by our Dukes.

The visit of the King of England to the waters had produced no beneficial effect. After the middle of August his health grew visibly worse, and about the 8th of September he had another stroke of paralysis which left no hope of his recovery. The King, Madame de Maintenon, and all the Royal Family paid him frequent visits. He received the Last Sacraments with the piety which had distinguished his life, and his death was expected at any moment. In this conjuncture our King resolved on an action more worthy of the generosity of Louis XII or Francis I than of his own wisdom. On the 13th of September he went from Marly to St. Germain ; the King of England was so ill that when the King was announced he hardly opened his eyes. The King told him that he had come to set his mind at ease with regard to the Prince of Wales, whom he had resolved to recognise as King of England, Scotland, and Ireland. The few English who were present fell on their knees, but their King gave no sign of life. Immediately afterwards the King visited the Queen of England, to whom he gave the same assurance, as he also did to the Prince of Wales ; the gratitude of both mother and son may be imagined. On his return to Marly the King announced what he had done to the Court, which received the announcement with loud applause and praises.

It was easy to applaud the King's action ; but the applause was followed by criticisms which, though not expressed so openly, were nevertheless worthy of consideration. The King had hoped all along that his moderation in Flanders, the restoration of the Dutch garrisons, and the

inactivity of his troops at a time when they would have met with little resistance, would incline England and Holland to peace, and keep them from interfering actively on behalf of the House of Austria. It was a wild hope, but the King was still sanguine enough to entertain it; he thought the Emperor would not be able to resist him without allies; he hoped the war in Italy would soon be settled, and with it the whole question of the Spanish succession.

Nothing could be more fatal to these hopes than what he had just done; it was in direct contradiction to the recognition of the Prince of Orange which he had solemnly agreed to in the Treaty of Ryswick, and which he had hitherto punctually carried out. It was a personal offence to King William, and in offending him the King offended the whole nation of England, to say nothing of Holland. So far as the Prince of Wales was concerned, his recognition gave him no solid advantage; it merely served to arouse the jealousy and suspicion of those opposed to him in England, to attach them more firmly to King William and the Protestant succession; it made them more bitter than ever against France, which presumed to give them a King and dictate the succession to their monarchy against their will. And yet it was no more in the King's power to restore the Prince of Wales than it had been to restore his father; he had failed to do so in a long war, and in that war he had not had the additional burden of defending the claims of his grandson to the Spanish succession.

The King of England, in the few moments of consciousness which he had, appeared very grateful to the King. He made him promise that there should be no ceremonial after his death, which took place about three in the afternoon of the 16th of September. The Prince of Conti had been at St. Germain for some days, because he and the Queen of England were first cousins, their mothers having been sisters, nieces of Cardinal Mazarin. The Papal Nuncio had also been there in waiting; and by the Pope's orders he recognised and saluted the Prince of Wales as King of England. Next day the body of the late King was taken to the monastery of the English Benedictines in the Rue St. Jacques, accompanied by a small escort, and followed by a few carriages containing the principal Englishmen of the Court of St. Germain. There it was deposited in a chapel like that of a private person, to await the time, apparently

still very remote, when it could be removed to England. This Prince was so well known as Duke of York, and afterwards as King of England, that I need say nothing of him here. He was greatly distinguished by his courage and kindness ; still more by the magnanimity with which he bore his misfortunes, and by his eminent piety.

On the 20th of September the King went to St. Germain, where he was received by the new King of England with the same ceremonies as had been observed on the occasion of the first visit to the late King. Next day the new King, in a great violet cloak, went to Versailles to return the visit. The King received him as he had received the King his father ; placed him always at his right hand, and reconducted him on leaving as far as the top of the staircase. The Duchess of Burgundy also received the new King ; but Monseigneur and the Princes, his sons, had left that morning for Fontainebleau, whither the King followed them next day, accompanied by the Duchess of Burgundy. Immediately afterwards the new King of England was recognised by the King of Spain.

The Earl of Manchester, the English Ambassador, did not appear at Versailles after the recognition of the Prince of Wales as King ; a few days later he departed without taking leave. King William was at his house of Loo in Holland, at table with some German Princes and other noblemen, when he received the news of the death of James II, and the recognition of his son. Beyond announcing the news he said not a single word, but he reddened, pulled his hat over his eyes, and could not conceal his displeasure. He sent orders to London that Poussin, who had charge of the King's affairs there in the absence of an Ambassador, was to leave the country immediately. This rupture was closely followed by the signature of an offensive and defensive alliance between England, Holland, and the Emperor, which was afterwards joined by other Powers. The King, in consequence, made fresh additions to his forces.

Towards the end of the visit to Fontainebleau, Louville arrived there from Barcelona, where he had left the King and Queen of Spain with Madame des Ursins and Marchin, the French Ambassador. He came ostensibly to report to the King all that had occurred in Spain during Harcourt's long illness, and to give particulars of the royal marriage ;

but in reality to obtain the King's consent to the King his grandson crossing over to Naples in the squadron commanded by the Count d'Estrées, which was just about to arrive at Barcelona, and placing himself at the head of the armies in Italy.

Louville had several long audiences of the King, at some of which Madame de Maintenon was present. All the most distinguished society of the Court flocked to see him; I got hold of him in my turn, and had an opportunity of satiating my curiosity. I undertook to bring him back to Paris on the day the King left Fontainebleau, but he only consented on a funny condition. The King of Spain had ordered him on no account to miss making the round of the canal. During the four or five days of his stay he had not had time to do it, so that on the morning of the departure, the 14th of November, I took him for this walk, quite by ourselves. When we came in we took up Madame de Saint-Simon and the Archbishop of Arles, afterwards Cardinal de Mailly, and we drove through to Paris without stopping, except to change horses. I was delighted to have this walk with him, to talk over some private matters at our ease; and during the drive to Paris I asked him so many questions about other things that when he arrived he had lost his voice and was quite speechless.

I have mentioned the bankruptcy of La Touanne and Saurion, and how the King, in order to sustain the public credit, had undertaken the payment of their deficit and seized their property. La Touanne had a charming house and garden at Saint-Maur, adjoining one belonging to M. le Duc. The latter bought it from the King at a very moderate price. A few days after the return of the Court from Fontainebleau M. le Duc went to stay there for a night with five or six of his most intimate friends, among whom was the Count de Fiesque. At supper, before any wine had been drunk, an argument arose between M. le Duc and the Count de Fiesque about some historical subject; the latter, who was clever and well-read, maintained his opinion skilfully; at last M. le Duc lost his temper completely, and, for want of better arguments, threw a plate at the Count's head, and drove him out of the house. M. de Fiesque, who had come intending to sleep there like the rest of the company, and had not kept his carriage, had to ask the parish priest for a night's lodging, and get back to Paris as well

as he could. This sudden and violent scene terrified the other guests ; as may be supposed, the rest of the supper and the evening were not lively. M. le Duc was still furious, perhaps angry with himself without confessing it ; he could not be induced to apologise for the insult while it was still fresh. Things remained in that position for several months, and the quarrel made a great noise in the world. At last common friends intervened ; M. le Duc, having recovered his senses, was only too glad to make the first advances, and M. de Fiesque was abject enough to accept them. They were reconciled, and, strange to say, then continued to live together as if nothing had happened.

The Duke de la Feuillade had not succeeded in recovering the King's favour. We have seen the robbery he committed on his uncle, the Bishop of Metz, and how Pontchartrain, with all his influence, had great difficulty in saving him from the King's anger on that occasion. He was excessively debauched, in more than one way ; he neglected his duty as an officer, his regiment was in a very bad state ; every year he arrived late at the army, and left it before any one. For these reasons he was always in marked disgrace with the King.

In person he was remarkably well made, with a very noble appearance and manners ; his countenance was so full of intelligence that one overlooked his ugliness, his yellow complexion, and the disgusting pimples which covered his face. He was in reality full of intelligence in every way. Any one who did not care to penetrate below the surface was convinced that he was a man of merit ; and he had in an especial degree the art of captivating women. His company was delightful to those who only wished to be amused ; he was magnificent in all his ways, generous, polite, very brave, very gallant, a great gambler, and a good loser. He was excessively proud of his ability ; very audacious, a great maker of epigrams and moral sentiments, fond of arguing in order to show off his wit. His ambition was boundless, but he had no perseverance ; he was everything by turns, and there was a constant struggle between his ambition and his love of pleasure. He liked praise and reputation, and had the art of courting adroitly persons of both sexes whose esteem seemed worth acquiring ; their example being followed, he was looked upon with a certain amount of respect in high society. He always seemed

anxious to make friends, and many persons were taken in by him for a long time. But in reality his heart was utterly corrupt; he had a soul of mud; he made a parade of impiety. To sum up, he was the most thoroughly dishonourable man who had appeared for many a long day.

He had married a daughter of Châteauneuf, sister to La Vrillière, with whom he had lived on bad terms for no reason whatever; but he had been left a widower without children. Being in one of his ambitious fits, and at a loss to know how to regain his footing, he took it into his head that Chamillart would be able to do anything for him if he married his second daughter; for Dreux, the husband of the elder daughter, was of too little account to stand in his light. He made the proposal to the Minister, who was highly flattered, the more so because his daughter was distressingly ugly. Chamillart spoke about it to the King, who pulled him up short. "You do not know La Feuillade," he said; "he only wants your daughter in order to worry you into worrying me to do something for him. Now I tell you beforehand that I will do absolutely nothing for him, and you will oblige me by thinking no more about it."

Chamillart said no more, but was much disappointed. La Feuillade would not take "no" for an answer; he felt that this marriage was the only chance for him, and continued to urge his suit on Chamillart. It is incomprehensible how he could return to the charge after such a point-blank refusal; still more incomprehensible to any one who knew the King how the latter could give way; but he did so. He gave Chamillart 200,000 livres towards the bride's dowry, as he usually did to his Ministers on similar occasions; Chamillart added 100,000 of his own, and the marriage took place. La Feuillade met with a cool reception from the King when he spoke to him after receiving Chamillart's consent. He lived with this wife from the very beginning on worse terms, if possible, than he had done with his first; but he had cast a spell over Chamillart, who was infatuated with him to the end of his days, though La Feuillade threw him over most shabbily when he had no further need of his assistance. We shall see in the sequel how dear this marriage cost the nation.

Fagon, First Physician to the King, was cut for the stone by Maréchal, a famous surgeon in Paris, whom he

preferred to all the court surgeons. Fagon, who was asthmatic, very lean, and subject to epileptic fits, was what doctors call a bad subject for such an operation; nevertheless, he recovered completely, thanks to his own coolness and the skill of Maréchal, who extracted a very large stone. In consequence of this operation Maréchal became, some time afterwards, First Surgeon to the King. His Majesty showed great anxiety on behalf of Fagon, whom he trusted implicitly in everything concerning his health. He gave him 100,000 francs on this occasion.

The Duke d'Harcourt arrived from Spain, and had long conversations with the King and Madame de Maintenon; from this time he began to rise high in the world, but to succeed he perhaps required better health; certainly he required more prudence.

The Count de Montrevel, at the request of the Elector of Cologne, Bishop of Liége, had seized the citadel of Liége, only just forestalling the Dutch; he now arrested the Baron de Méan, Dean of the Chapter of Liége, and his brother, by the orders of the King and the same Elector, and imprisoned them in the citadel of Namur. They were both very ambitious men, especially the Dean, who was clever and audacious, and excelled in plots and intrigues. They were warmly attached to King William, who made considerable use of them. He had tried lately to corrupt the Governor of Huy, and planned the seizure of Liége by the Dutch. These arrests caused a great outcry against France on the part of the allies, who were furious at losing two useful tools and at seeing their plans exposed by the seizure of their papers. But the time for half-measures was over; they were allowed to make as much noise as they liked, but the prisoners were kept safely under lock and key.

Old Bissy died at Metz, much regretted on account of his justice and uprightness; he was a retired lieutenant-general, and had long commanded in chief in Lorraine and the Three Bishoprics. He was father of the Abbé de Bissy, for whom he obtained the see of Toul, and who has since become a Cardinal, and made a great noise in the world. When quite a young man, having hardly left school, the Abbé went to see his father at Nanci, and everybody was loud in his praises. The father, who was an honourable man, a good citizen, and truthful, became impatient. "You do not know him," he said; "look well at that little half-

fledged priest who seems so innocent ; he is devoured by ambition, and, to make his fortune, would set both Church and State in a blaze." Old Bissy's prophecy was only too true. I shall have to speak more than once of this "half-fledged priest"—that was what he looked like all his life.

M. de Montespan died at his place in Guyenne ; he is too well known owing to the pernicious beauty of his wife, and her numerous and still more pernicious offspring. Before her *liaison* with the King he had an only son by her, the Marquis d'Antin, *menin* to Monseigneur, who contrived to turn the disgrace of his family to good account. As soon as his father was dead he wrote to the King asking him to allow an examination of his claims to the dukedom of Épernon. All his mother's children asked the King either to grant his request or to create him a Duke, and the Duke of Orleans acted as their spokesman. This foolish pretension to the Épernon peerage turned out eventually to be his stepping-stone to fortune, but the time was not yet come ; there was an insuperable obstacle in his way—Madame de Montespan was still alive ; and Madame de Maintenon hated her too much to give her the satisfaction of seeing the elevation of her son.

In spite of Madame de Maintenon, the Duke de Chevreuse was more fortunate, for he obtained permission to resign his office of Captain of the *chevaux-légers* of the Guard in favour of his son the Duke de Montfort. Since the affair of the Archbishop of Cambrai Madame de Maintenon had never been reconciled to his faithful friends, who had formerly been her own ; she especially hated the Duke de Chevreuse and the Duchess de Beauvilliers. She did not like M. de Beauvilliers, but she got on better with him ; Madame de Chevreuse was the least in disgrace with her. But the King had taken them all four so thoroughly into his favour again that Madame de Maintenon could never contrive to do them any harm.

So ended this year 1701 ; and with it ended all the King's prosperity.

END OF VOL. I

